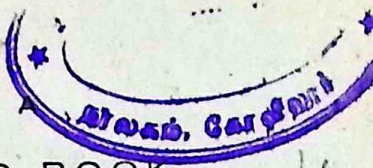

HAND BOOK

OF

SAIVA RELIGION

(a religion of Bakthi, Love and Devotion)

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PREFACE

This handbook, such as it is shorn off all technical terms and dry philosophy, treats within a small compass all the main aspects of our Saiva religion and philosophy helpful for solving problems of life arising on one's path to the ultmate Goal.

It consists mainly of co-ordinated notes and summaries. Overlapping and repetition have become necessary as the subjects treated are involved and inter-dependent. This necessity has however been reduced to a minimum. Practical side of our religion has been given prominence compatible with the space available.

This small book is meant to supply a long-felt demand among our English-educated friends and students for gaining a comprehensive idea of our religion and philosophy. It is all anlysed for them.

What religion is, what its functions and purposes are, how religion becomes necessary and similar aspects are treated in the first chapter entitled "Religion in general". This is followed by the chapter on "Saivaism" which is practically an introduction to the other chapters. A religion is expected to teach us the relation between God and soul and between soul and nature or Pasa as we call it. God, soul and Pasa are found in chapters 3, 4 and 5 respectively. To the practical and working knowledge of Bakti or Love to God, and worship, the things essential for the practice of our religion, are devoted chapters 6 and 7. Authcritative statements of

the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy and religion is found in SivagnanaBotham and SivagnanaSiddiar which are summarised in chapter 8. The last chapter gives a descriptive list of our scriptures and sacred books. We expect this book to serve as a general introduction to those scriptures and sacred books.

This religion is worth the study from any point of view. It is said to have all the essentials of a well-balanced religion. It is the oldest religion of the world admitted to be beyond all historic data. Some scholars trace it back to about two hundred centuries. It has stood the test of time standing as it is on its own merits and is yet a flourishing virile religion. It is a universal religion based on eternal truths and highest morality, embracing within its fold all the other religions without hate on the belief that they are all on the path to reach God. It knows neither caste nor class nor colour nor race. It makes no difference between the poor and the rich, the illiterate and the learned and the low and the high. It is not ridden by dogmas, but on the contrary it encourages "*ishtam*"(own way) in all forms of worship and Sadana.

It is never the aim of any good Hindu much less a Saivite to convert other religionists to his faith as he believes in the truth that all religions work their own way to reach God, but he would have the preference for his religion. It is however desirable that they should know something of a religion which respects their religious faiths and why it so respects.

The generic terms "Hinduism" and "Vedantism" are very often misused and misappropriated by a

particular School of philosophers as the title for its books. Under these terms come Saivaism, Vishnuvaism, Jainisim, and the several schools of philosophy based on the Vedas. Foreigners who have no knowledge of this fact on reading some of the books of writers following Sankara's school of Vedantism, have put the question to the Hindus in general " What next is required for the people who claim to be God themselves ". In this connexion, we should warn Saiva students against accepting without thought the unproved statements of philosophical theories as found in such publications. After all, they are only theories and it makes no difference whether we accept them or not. However we need not fight those Schools as beyond the stage of theories they are mostly with us in their honest endeavour and aim to get the liberation of the soul.

My sincere thanks and those of the interested readers are due to Mr. C. V. Jambulingam Pillai of Madras, Government Pensioner and Pandit for having urged me to write this book and helped me in its composition and proof-reading. There are my obligations to Mr. S. Shivapadasundaram, B.A., retired Principal of Victoria College, Jaffna and to Rao Sahib S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, B.A., B.L., Reader in Tamil of the Madras University for the kind suggestions given to me when they went through my manuscripts.

SAN THOME
Madras, 13th August 1945. S. KATIRESU.

A
HAND BOOK
of
Saiva Religion

CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	iii
Chapter	
I. Religion in General	1
II. Saivaism	11
III. Lord Shiva (Pati-God)	22
IV. Soul (Pasu)	32
V. Pasa	41
(1) Anava	44
(2) Maya	49
(3) Karma	51
VI. Bakti	61
Yoga Pada	76
VII. Divine Worship	81
VIII. Sivagnana Botham and Siddi —A Summary	93
IX Our Scriptures	108

A Hand-book of Saiva Religion.

Chapter I

Religion in General

The order and movement of the Universe suggests evidence of plan and purpose, and cannot be attributed to good luck. The scientific reading of the universe is by no means atheistic. Science renders an account of certain aspects of existence and leaves ultimate questions to other study like philosophy and religion. If we are loyal to the spirit and achievement of science, we are led to believe that there lies behind the cosmic process a spiritual reality which it is difficult to grasp and impossible to define.

Aristotle, the Greek philosopher was led from the consideration of the universe up to what he calls the first Immoveable Mover who being Himself Immoveable causes all things to move.

Newton, the great scientist says, "all these movements according to rule and purpose cannot have their origin in mere mechanical force. The most exquisite combination of the Sun, the Moon, the planets etc. can have sprung from nothing short of counsel and dominion of a Being at once intelligent and mighty".

We have shastras for every department secular knowledge—the fine arts, medicine, archery,

horsemanship, ship-building, politics etc. and why should there be none for spiritual knowledge?

Science teaches us not to believe in anything on the unsupported testimony of any particular person, not because it has been written in this book or that, nor because our forefathers have believed in it. It tells us to examine the evidence thoroughly and then accept them if they satisfy reason. Our sages have done the work for us explaining the process which could satisfy our reason. The Vedas and Agamas are such works. Sivagnana—Bodam is such a work bodily taken from one of the Agamas. The principles of religion enunciated and proved in the Vedas and Agamas are unchangeable. But those religious practices based on social conditions and position must change with the change of society.

Faith, coming from the heart, is no doubt higher than reason in matters religious. But it shonld be employed only when reason is inadequate. In all things where the guidance of reason is clear, it is absurd to cling to unreason and call it faith. Scriptures come to fulfil reason and not to destroy it.

Just as it is the intellectual faculty which is the mainspring of scientific culture, so is the intuitive faculty the mainspring of super—science. The intellectuals argue, but the sages announce an effect of intuitive knowledge. Once the priest interpreted God to man, now he interposes himself

between God and man. The uninspired priests rule where once inspired prophets lived.

All knowledge is relative and the true purpose of philosophy and religion is to seek the relation that subsists between man and the world, and again between man and God. From the relations deduced we proceed to govern our life and guide our actions. It is these relations that our Vedas and Agamas have solved and it is our attempt to study them and if they accord to our reason to act accordingly.

Religion establishes the relationship between man and the endless universe and its source—the first cause. There is an insistent need and urge in the human soul to come to terms with the unseen reality. We can never get rid of Religion.

There are a good many today who think that religion is not necessary, except for those who relish it. If we are kind and tolerant and good-tempered that is enough, they say. Mere amiability and good-will cannot save the individual or the world. Religion alone can make human life sweet and pure. Mere moral life is not sufficient for the liberation of man. It cannot give us the feeling of love, joy or exaltation and the spirit of courage and self-sacrifice which religious life gives. Mere morality cannot abolish separateness and sin. It is only by fleeing to, and taking refuge in God with love and devotion that we leave our

separate selves behind. This process is nothing but Bakthi—love to God.

Moral purity is a *Sine qua non.* The gulf between man and God cannot be crossed unless moral purity is attained. Morality is no substitute for religion. It gains its completion only in religion. True religion always strengthens morality.

It is an error to think spirituality as a thing divorced from life. It is an error to think that the heights of religion are above the struggles of the world.

To look upon life as an uninterrupted pursuit of enjoyment is the mark of irreligion. Suffering is not an accidental accompaniment of life, but is central to it. In pain and travail, all high achievements are sought. If suffering leads to fulfilment of our ideal, it is as much happiness as a life of pleasure is. A life of joy and the joy of life are not the same.

Religion comes of the heart and philosaphy comes of the mind and one is the hand—maid of the other.

Mere science or philosophical theory is dry and of little practical value to mankind. But when it is applied to practice, it touches the heart and leads to worship of the Reality. It is that power which is expected of a good religion,

Religion is expected to show us the way to God who is our eternal quest. It is God who has given us the urge for that quest.

The object of all religions is to take their respective votaries by the hand and lead them on step by step from worldliness to that ultimate goal "Mukthi".

Religion must be ready and able to help man in whatever condition he is, in servitude or freedom in the depths of degradation or on the heights of purity. The ideal of religion will be fulfilled by its capacity for performing this great function.

True religion is not a separate activity of our soul, but only the spirit in which we carry on all our activities. Religion is nothing if it is not lived. It has to be applied not only to life but to the whole life. The spirit has to enter into and mould our society, our politics, our literature, our science, onr individual character, affections and aspirations.

All religions recognise that there is no religion higher than Truth and there is one goal though many may be the ways.

Religious knowledge is one thing and religious life quite another. A man who has religious knowledge without religious experience is like a man who has only one leg. He cannot stand secure nor walk to the goal.

No purely human effort can ever establish a

religion. Religion, which creates the quest after God, is essentially super-natural. It is the Divine element running like golden thread through all the religions that bind them. It is the human element, if any, in any religion that divides the people.

Religion is ever a practical science and there never was nor will there be any theological religion. It is practical first and knowledge afterwards.

Religion is not so much a theory of the supernatural as an attitude of spirit, a temper of mind. We shall be judged not by technical points and beliefs and doctrines but by life and character.

Our Saiva religion is non-dogmatic and the adherents possess as a rule which may be called spiritual good manners. An organised religion or church is hostile to beliefs which are opposed to its own creed, It is obliged to enforce beliefs and to persecute unbeliefs on principle.

Real religion is more a matter of culture than of scholastic learning. God is not the highest form to be known, but the highest to be realised. We learn the truth not by criticism and discussion, but by deepening life and changing the life of consciousness.

If religion is to be a force that transforms our life and not simply a knowledge of doctrines and dogmas, what is the use of going to it when all our activities are out in old age, and when our

lives have almost come to an end? Let us, however say "Better late than never".

To the orthodox man, his religion is more a stagnant pool than a flowing stream. There is no progress. He worships the letter of the law and kills the spirit. But on the other hand, the Westernized youth is only a confused jumble of ideas. There is no organised sincerity about his mind. Gita says, "Fools who rejoice in the letter of the Vedas are ridden with desires and they long for a paradise." Gita includes the study of Vedas in its list of virtues, but says that the vision of God cannot be gained by the study of the Vedas or by penances but only by devotion to Him.

Religion for its essentials has its rituals, its ethics, its form of worship, and its philosophy. It is only when all these essentials—traditional, moral emotional and rational—receive due emphasis that we have a well-balanced religion. The rituals which are traditional appeal to the unconscious mind of man; the ethics being the moral side appeals to his will; the forms of worship appeal to his emotions; and the philosophy satisfies the rational side of his intellect.

The highly religious men share the same outlook and spirit. They possess a security which is undisturbed by strokes of fortune. They possess a spirituality which is unconquered even in overwhelming catastrophe. Self-sacrifice which does not count the cost, self-less giving which does not

ask for return and disinterested work become their daily life.

The present-day civilisation hardly leaves us any time for the saner pursuit of the mind. It is inimical to that repose and concentration of spirit without which genuine meditation and worship cannot go on. Greater knowledge has not resulted in greater wisdom. It is all a distraction.

Today we work in crowded offices, schools and factories, enjoy in crowds, go out in parties, sin in company and worship in congregation. Quiet evenings at home, solitary walk in the country; cultivation of spirit and meditation seem to be boring. Ours is truly a sleepless generation. The working together, instead of making us know each other in the fellowship of common effort and contributing to their well-being deadens our social instincts. Rest, instead of helping us to know ourselves in the freedom of thought, blinds our energy by giving work to the devil, Worship, instead of helping us to know the spirit of the universe and the purpose of it all makes us to be satisfied with the mere formalities and dogmas of the congregation helping bigotry.

Religious bigotry is really an enemy of religion in the guise of a friend. It has been responsible for many a crime against humanity such as forcible conversions, religious persecutions, inquisitions and massacres.

Suicide is conclusive proof of the inadequacy of the religious life led by the person committing suicide. There is always something in a true religion to keep one calm enough not to think of suicide.

It can be said to the credit of the Hindus in general that we neither hate nor seek to convert people of other faiths as we regard the zeal for converting others as a want of trust in God. We consider all the religions of the world as sincere endeavour to aid the spirit in its progress from lower to higher conception of Truth.

Religion is not a matter of mere rituals nor is it a matter of mere ethics or moral code. We want something more, namely Bakhti to induce Love and Devotion to God.

The theory of Ishtam-my own way-gives freedom to every individual to walk his own way in his religion; at the end all the ways must meet together.

Real religion instead of being a creature must be a creator. It must sustain the people instead of being sustained by them. It must be able to guide us, control us and give us protection and perfection. Real religion is that which lies behind such things as religious experience and religious men, manifesting its presence in goodness.

The words "Margam", "Samayam" and "Matam" are denoted by the English word

RELIGION. Religion as a "Margam" would be only a way or path leading to God.

Religion as "Samaya" would be a power which leads us to union with God. Religion as 'Mata" would be a set of doctrines, a lifeless bundle of them to be accepted or rejected according to the tastes of the follower.

The term "Hinduism" is a generic name for all the group of religions based on the Vedas and Agamas. Hinduism is not a single religion with a definite creed. It includes Saivaism, Vishnuvaism, Shaktaism and the several schools of Vedantism. It is such a generic term that no Saivite objects to his being called a Hindu.

Chapter II

Saivaism

This chapter is more or less an introduction to the other chapters following.

Hinduism is a group of religions which accept the authority of the Vedas. The most important members of the group are Saivaism, Vishnuvaism and Shaktaism (worship of Sakti, Kali etc.), whose additional authorities are the Saivagamas, Pancharatra and Shaktagama respectively. Of these, Saivaism has the largest number of followers. In its orthodox form, it is found in South India North Ceylon, Kashmir and Nepal.

Saivaism means and includes *Saiva marga*, the way to reach God, (marga means way) *Saiva matam*, the doctrine and philosophy of the religion, and *Saiva Samayam* being the religion which leads us to the union with Lord Shiva (samayam means that which leads to union). All the essentials required of a well-balanced religion are found in Saivaism: (1) the rituals forming the traditional appeal to the unconscious mind, (2) the ethics or morals to the will, (3) the forms of worship to the emotions and (4) the philosophy to the intellect. Worship including rituals are found in a chapter below. Ethics and further worship are found in the chapter on Bakthi. Philosophy is found more or less in this chapter and the chapter on Sivagnana Botham and Siddhiar.

Saivaism is literally the religion of those worshipping Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is described as *Sat chit* in Sivagnana Botham. As *sat* He is the formless Pure Being - the Impersonal - in which aspect we cannot perceive Him. But as *Chit* or grace or Sakti—the Personal—He reaches us and we can know Him *Sat* is the Sun which we can never comprehend and *chit* is the light of the Sun one ray of which is enough to remove our veil of darkness.

Lord Shiva, again, is not one of tho Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. He is the fourth *Turiyam* or *Chathurtham* (the fourth) and is the Lord of all, including the Trinity.

Gita says: worship of Shiva alone would secure Sayujya (moksha) and the worship of the other three would secure their respective heavens or worlds or Padams.

The cults of Shakti, Subramaniya or Murugan and Ganapathi have sunk their identity in Saivaism. There are other cults of Saivaism in Bengal and elsewhere with minor differences in their doctrines.

The worship of Shiva was known to have existed from even pre-historic times. It was universal during the days of Mahabarata and Sri Krishna (about 5000 years ago).

The word "Saivite" means a worshipper of Lord Shiva and a follower of Saivagamas. The word has also come to denote a very narrow section

of Saivaites who pass for hereditary vegetarians.

Saivaism is no sect of Hinduism because Hinduism is not a single religion with a definite creed, The several religions and schools of philosophy based on the Vedas and Agamas are called by the generic term Hinduism. Thus Saivaites are also Hindus.

Saivaism, the most ancient of all the religions of the world, has stood the test of time and the inroads made into it by foreign invaders and propagandists of other faiths. Though the oldest, it is yet a flourishing and virile religion as it is based on the bed-rock of eternal Truth.

Revolt of Saiva devotees against the sacrifices of animals by the Brahmin priests who indulged in eating their flesh initiated the reform to vegetarian diet among them. Ahimsa (non-killing) is a creed of Saivaism.

The Suddha (pure) Saivaites of the Tamil districts are as rigid as the Veera Saivaites (Lingayets) of the Canarese districts in worship of Lord Shiva

The Saiva Achariyas include the 63 Nayanmars (devotees) who come under Tirumular's description of Kadum (austere) Suddha Saivas. They go direct to Shiva without staying at the halting places marked by the Suddha Saivaites.

The Saiva religion preserves as such the old ritualistic religion and tradition from the days of Rig Veda, which may be observed from the ritualistic portion and if there was a change at all, it was only when all the symbols and sacrifices became more truly clothed with a spiritual meaning.

The Devaram and Tiruvasagam of the four Tamil Saints correspond to the Vedic hymns, with the difference that the truths they inculcate is peculiarly Saivite. The rationale of the philosophy is not described therein. It is entirely left to saints like Meikanda Devar and Arulnandi Sivam.

Vedic sacrifice of animals find no place in Saivaism, much less the eating of flesh or fish. Abstaining from animal diet is one of the various rules of Saivaism. Mere abstinence does not make one a real Saivite.

Saivaism is not opposed to the many popular notions. All paths leading to God are good paths, but the Saivite will have his preference.

Saivaism is an all-embracing religion which fights no other religion, as it considers them to be different steps in the ladder of spiritual progress. It embraces within its fold all the other religions as Siddhiyar puts it. That is no doubt a test of true religion.

The doctrine of Grace, Love and Bakthi is the distinguishing feature of Saivaism. A special chapter on Bakthi is devoted to it below.

To a Saivite, no service to God and his Baktas was high or low in itself. The real test of Bakthi consisted in two things: (1) determination to carry it through in spite of all obstacles and (2) doing the thing without the expectation of any return.

Bakthas attached greater importance to sincerity and righteous conduct than to doctrine.

Ideas of caste rigidity is repugnant to the highly evolved Saivite. Caste prejudice is but an *anava malam.* This is treated under the chapter on Pasam.

The Vedas instruct mankind only by degrees as they are not able to grasp things all at once. They are first instructed to see God in one of the five elements. Then they are made to think for the time being that the Deity presiding over one or other of the elements—Indra, Agni, Varuna or the like-is the true God. They are gradually taken higher and higher to Rudra or Vishnu as the true God. The worship of these forms a religion of its own. In the end, they are instructed to see the true God himself as the Being that is above one and all the others. With this ends the general part of the Vedas, with only descriptions of the general features sufficient to distingnish one from the other. The special features and the special modes of worship are left to be described in the Sivagamas. As Tirumular would put it, the Vedas

and the Agamas are true revelations of God, the former is general and the other is special. The general one leads to the special. The special part or Sivagama is called Siddhantam or Saiva Siddhantam.

Each of the four Vedas is divided into *Karma Kandam* or the ceremonial portion and the *Jnana Kandam* the philosphical portion. So also are each of the 28 Agamas divided into *Sariyai, Kiriyai. Yoga* and *Jnana padams*. The first three are the ceremonial portion and the last is the philosophical portion.

The Upanishads represent the *Jnana Kandam* of the Vedas. They are also called Vedanta (being the end of the Vedas). Likewise, *Jnana padams* of the Agamas are called the *Agamanta* (being the end of the Agamas). Agamanta is Siddhanta corresponding to the Vedanta of the Vedas.

In the Karma Kanda of the Vedas, various modes of worship directed towards the lower deities are set forth in detail. Although the mode of worship of the supreme God of all is also in a way treated therein, the same is treated in detail in the Agamas. Rituals and the various mental practices as set forth in the Sivagamas are all directed towards Lord Shiva. All aim at the attainment of Shiva's Bliss in one way or the other.

The philosophy enunciated in the Jnana padam of the Sivagamas is called Saiva Siddhantam or Siddhantam simply. Saiva Siddhantam, says Umapathiar, is the cream of Vedantam.

A simple summary of Siddhantam and its philosophy shorn off all learned technicalities will show how the teaching runs. Siddhantam postulates three categories: Pati, Pasu and Pasa or God, Soul and Nature. These three categories are treated in the following three chapters in detail They are called the *Tripatarta*. They are eternal and separate entities.

The entire economy of present dispensation is under the control of God and is specially designed by Him for the emancipation of the soul from Pasa. Pasa is a bondage subdivided into Maya (matter) Anava (egoism) and Karma (work). Maya is the material cause of not only the universe as we see, but also of our body in which the soul lives. God is *vyapaka* or immanent and pervading in both Maya and soul and is in fact their guiding principle.

It is not in the power of the soul to lead an independent life, either it must remain in unwitting communion with Maya or in conscious fellowship with God, an intermediate step being denied to it.

The ocean of life or existence in the world is the soul's orbit. It shrinks towards God when the soul would not be attracted by Maya.

The soul has the ability to know both Maya and God. It knows God only by His Grace. It is possessed of a limited sentiency, an attribute which it shares in common with God.

But the soul cannot be cognised by Maya as it lacks sentiency and for the same reason the senses and the mind, which are fashioned out of the insentient Maya (like an eye-glass) cannot cognise the soul.

Pasa is specially superintended by God, in order that it, albeit insentient, may *more vigourously* and consistently work with the law of desert and causality (or the law of Karma) in relation to the soul. The law of causation is really the inherent and eternal property of Maya. As long as the soul chooses to enjoy the company of Maya, so long will the law of causality and desert hold the soul within its meshes. But its connexion with the soul is only temporary though it is by itself eternal like the soul.

The soul is also possessed of an ingrained perversity that is inherited from Pasa, whereby it mistakes its sensuous wallowing in the lap of Maya for the higher goal. As the perversity is so inherited it is eradicable. The soul can thus convert the perversity to work the perdition of Pasa itself. When this is done the award af spirituai freedom is always made by God to the soul by an act of Grace, that is when the soul has complete emancipation from its bondage to Pasa or nature. That is the aim of Siddhantam.

The Upanishads treat also of the three entities: God, Soul and Pasa. One set of school of philosophers has adopted some only of the Upanishads and another some others. Sri Sankara, a Maya-

vadi who asserts Monism which claims that there is nothing else except God and that everything else is an illusion, has, for instance, adopted ten of the Upanishads only; while Ramanuja, a Vaishnavite has adopted some more. Madhvaites have adopted a few more. Unlike is the case with the Siddhanta School of Sri Kanta which recognises all the 108 Upanishads as entitled to the same weight and reconciles them with the Jnanapada of Sivagamas.

Originally there were about sixteen such schools. The first and oldest of them, the Sankhya school founded by Kapila postulated Soul and Maya as separate entities and showed the way for the soul to get rid of Maya and left the soul in the mid air. It was again that his disciples that made the soul to reach God. This philosopher, also referred to in Bhagavat Gita, lived about 5000 years ago. Recently came the four set of schools referred to above.

The Upanishads or Vedanta have many apparently contradictory and inconsistent statements. Siddhantam, which recognises the 108 Upanishads as entitled to the same weight, reconciles them with the Jnanapada of the Sivagamas.

The following are a few out of the many instances in which Siddhantam has reconciled the apprarently contradictory statements in the Upanishads with the Jnana Pada of Sivagamas.

Take for instance a theory relating to God. He is *Sa-guna* (having attributes) and *Nir-guna* (having

no attributes). One and the same Upanishad gives varying texts about it. Agamanta would reconcile them and conclude that He has not got the attributes of the soul, but has the attributes peculiar to Him—special attributes.

As to the theory of the individuality of the soul, the Upanishads give conflicting texts. The Agamanta would reconcile these and say that soul is an entity distinctfrom God, Their existence is co-existent without mutual exclusion, as soul and body. This relationship Agamanta would style as *aawaita* (not-two) relationship. This explains the difference between the Vedanta of Sankara's school (where Sankara asserts that soul is part and parcel of God and not a separate entity) and Siddhantam.

Such conflicting texts are also found in the Upanishads as to the theory of Maya. According to some it is no entity at all. According to some it is an entity in itself. Siddhantam would reconcile them and say that it is an entity but not such an unchangeable entity like God. Here also Sankara asserts that Maya is no entity at all and is only an illusion.

The Siddhanta School enunciates four paths as the way to purify oneself to receive the Grace of God and be with Him, namely, the paths of Sariyai, Kiriyai, Yoga and Jnana explained in detail in the chapters on Bakthi and Worship.

Bakthas, as Gnana Sampanthar observes, indulge in spiritual dances, songs and chanting of

Vedas. Tirumular explains the external features of the mystic dance of Nataraja-the Lord of Tillai. The last of the dances is described as Shiva's mystic dance. That dance is the symbolic dance of destruction. It is not a single act, but a series of acts with "ananda" dance at the end. When Lord Shiva removes the *mala* or *pasa* of the men of austerity He appears as *Sat-guru* to them. God alone is the Guru who shews Shiva. Guru has to be sought in our hearts. Sat-Guru reveals Himself, breaks the bond of Pasa and leads the aspirant to Mukthi. So say Tirumular and Sampanthar.

The strength of Saivaism lies in its adaptability to all sorts and conditions of people. It has its practical, spiritual, philosophical, moral, ceremonial, imaginative and contemplative sides and what not to suit those of such inclinations.

> "The soul with Shiva Bakti shakes off
> Pasa Bandham and by His Grace gets Mukthi
> to be united to Him in Advaitam."

Chapter III

Lord Shiva (Pati - God)

There is but one God who is nameless and formless. The Vedas define "God" as Pure Intelligence, a Perfect Being, a principle. That is Lord Shiva. Sivagnana Botham defines God as "Sat-chit." Sat denotes Pure Being, Chit or Sakthi or Arul denotes His aspect in which He reaches us when we can know Him. Sat is the Sun which we can never comprehend, Chit is the Light, one ray of which is enough to remove our darkness and but for that one ray of light we can never know the Sun.

God of Saiva Siddhanta, that is, Lord Shiva is not one of the Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra. He is the f... th *Turyam* or *Chaturtam* (meaning fourth) and is the Lord of all, including the Trinity. Lord Krishna says "Worship of Shiva alone would secure Sayujya (Moksha) and the worship of the others Brahma, Vishnu and Rndra would only secure their respective heavens or Padas." In the Scriptures we find Him described as the "Lord of the Trinity". God again of Saiva Siddhanta is one of the Tripatartas (3 entities), Pati (God), Pasu (Soul) and Pasa (Mala); all these three are distinct and eternal and Siddhanta postulates the unlimited ascendency of Pati. Pati energises both Pasu and Pasa and is their guiding principle.

When the soul gets out of Pasa, it leans on God who by His Sakti or Grace receives it.

The word "Shiva" as an adjective means gracious or auspicious. Some scholars say that it comes from, the root "*So*" meaning 'to make thin or attenuate'. Thus Shiva would mean one who would attenuate sin. Others say it comes from "Si" meaning 'to lie down.' Shiva is thus described as lying down in the shape of "Pranalinga" in the cavity of the heart-the Divine abode in man. He lies there as a witness. This refers to the two birds of the Vedas dwelling on a tree (human body) one (God) witnessing and the other (soul) eating the fruits of the tree, Linga is the symbol of Para-Brahmam. He has no form as inthe case of other Deities. The higher state of Shiva is formless. Shiva is called "Jothi" or brilliance. Linga Purana describes the birth of Jothi Linga.

There are two ideas of God in our scriptures, the one Personal and the other Impersonal.

The idea of Personal God is that He is omnipresent creator, preserver and destroyer of everything, the eternal Father and Mother of the Universe, but one who is eternally separate from us and from all souls; and liberation consists in coming near unto Him and living in Him.

The other is the idea of Impersonal where all these adjectives are taken off as superfluous, as illogical and the idea is of an Impersonal omniscient Being. In the Vedas we have 'It' for 'He.'

Personal God is Sakthi where He is thought of as active, creating, sustaining and destroying. He is Impersonal or Absolute when the Supreme Being is thought of as inactive and at rest.

Sakthi literally means power. The Sakthi of the Lord is His energy or power or will or light or grace or knowledge. It is by His Sakthi He evolves the universe, links the whole world to Himself, connects God and Man, gives life to beings, harmony to things and to them their peculiar beauty, taste and brightness.

God stands in inseparable union with Gnana-Sakthi and causes the soul to undergo the process of evolution by inducing its good and bad acts *i.e.* good and bad Karma.

The Arul Sakthi of the Lord pervades the whole universe like the sound in the tune and the flavour in the fruit. Arul is Grace.

God, the all bountiful, makes the soul eat the fruits of the previous Karma without suffering any change, just as the soil makes the cultivator reap as he sows.

God would not have given a man's body in his present life of His mere will, as opposed to His law, as otherwise He would be open to the charge of partiality.

Just as a sprout appears when a seed is planted in the moist earth, so the world is created from Maya *i.e.* cosmic matter, by the Lord's Sakthi. This

creation is strictly in accordance with the law. The creation is without a purpose to Himself, but is for the experience and the emancipation of the soul. He evolves the world and removes ignorance and darkness.

He is omnipresent, without being one with or different from the world. He pervades everything by his Sakthi, just like the light of the Sun. He is co-existent without mutual exclusion just like the word and its meaning.

His action which involves no change on His part may be illustrated by the Sun shining without any volition on its part, and causing the lotus flower to bloom or to wither.

God exists in all the souls inseparably though different from them. The soul when in its body (human body) identifies itself with the body. Similarly though the Lord stands in intimate relation with the soul, He is not the soul and the soul cannot become the Lord. He is the *vowel* and the souls are the *consonants* which cannot be pronounced without a vowel.

Just as iron is attracted to the magnet, so do souls performing Karma join the bodies in which the Karma is in effect and eat the fruits by his Arul Sakthi.

The husk of the paddy is not new to the grain of rice but it is co-existent with it; so did the Malas (Maya, Anava and Karma) co-exist with the

soul and were not acquired by it at any intermediate time. They undergo change in the presence of God just as in the Sun's rays one plant flowers and another bears fruit. It is only with His Arul (Grace) can Mala (husk) be removed when the soul (grain) would become free from birth. No rice without husk is known to have germinated.

It cannot be said that Time produces the changes in the world and therefore it is God. Time is itself inert and non-intelligent. God as the efficient cause actuates Time which is the instrumental cause.

The world evolves from Maya (cosmic matter) declare the wise. Here Maya becomes the material cause. Maya cannot evolve by itself and it is not conscious and as such it is non-intelligent. It could not have been evolved by the soul, though intelligent, as it is not conscious unless in conjunction with the body and senses which again is Maya which is not intelligent nor conscious.

In the making of a pot, clay is the material cause, the wheel is the instrumental cause and potter is the efficient cause. Similarly, the Lord like the potter, creates the world from Maya the material cause, with the aid of His Gnana Sakthi as the instrumental cause.

Sivagnana Botham in offering proof of the existence of God says:- As the seen universe spoken of as he, she and it, undergoes the

changes of original production, development and decay, this universe must be an entity created by an efficient cause. As the products of industry cannot be produced except by an artisan, so the world which appears as a product has a Creator or an efficient cause—This cosmic entity can only be developed from the condition into which it had been dissolved. This is a physical fact. This entity has no power of action except through the unknown author, the First Cause-It is this efficient and first cause that we call the Supreme God or Hara. Hara means creator.

To see God by the naked eye is meaningless. He may manifest Himself in so many ways; mere seeing the manifestation is not what is wanted. You recognise it only as such, that is to satisfy the naked eye-To see God otherwise is as impossibls as you may try to see the air in a room. It is impossible to see air but you may feel it. It is impossible to see sound but you can hear it. It is impossible to see the smell of a scent but you can feel it through your nose. God is beyond all these. You cannot see Him but you can feel His presence in your actions and speeches. To feel that presence you should train yourself to realise His energy in you when doing the actions. To so realise you will have to learn to shift the burden of your actions on Him. The test of shifting the burden is to see if you feel affected by the result of the actions. Good and bad results are passed on to Him and there is nothing for you to feel affected.

God is to be heard and enjoyed in the soul' He is beyond the Soul. His body is the soul. He penetrates into the recesses of the soul.

We have seeing with the senses, seeing with the mind and seeing with the Divine Eye, which last we may call intuition. In his 12th Sutra, Meykandar says that the highest devotees attain divine knowledge by being taught intuitively by the innate God.

The intellect is but an instrument and not the essential thing of man. Reason may be a great guide at times, and may also be our betrayer at other times. Modern man represents triumph of mechanical intellect over mere instinct just as a saintly devotee represents triumph of divine intuition over mere intellect. Reason is purely arithmetical where intuition is an unfoldment from where we know not. It is not a thought, but an influx from a superior realm which sweeps into thought. It is not an emotion.

Henri Bergson of France has ushered "Intuition" into the world of thought as a new principle of philosophy. He at the same time admits that we do not miss it in the system of the great thinkers. The method of intellectual construction is incapable of grasping Reality. Intellect rouses up instinct and enlarges it into intuition. Intellect tries to catch up life and Reality but fails; and thus failing, it gives the start for instinct to enlarge itself into intuition so that it may catch the Real.

We do notobtain in tuition from Reality unless we have won Its confidence by a long fellowship with Its superficial manifestations. An example of it may be a Bakthan in his Chariya and Kiriya stages of Sadana. (religious practice.)

Intuition does not give more and more of Reality. It gives the knowledge of the Reality in a flash or we take the knowledge by storm, as it were. Intuition penetrates into every detail without any conscious effort. The details so to speak spring up and flow out. An example of this may be a Bakthan in the Yogic and Gnana stages of Sadana. It is at this stage that intuition gives us a glimpse of Reality. as was in the case of the 63 Nayanmars. Intuition thus becomes a living experience or consciousness which overflows intellect and in a way explains the experiences of our great saints and thinkers.

The worship of Shiva was known to have existed from even pre-historic times. His worship was universal during the days of Mahabaratha that is about the beginning of the present Kaliyuga.

In the Vedic times the worship of Subramanya was little known though the name is referred to. In the later age we have allusions to Karthigeya or Subramanya. The Southerners identified Murugan with Subramanya. The worship of Subramanya has since merged into Saivaism.

The cults of Sakthi, Subramanya and Ganapathy have sunk their identity in Saivaism. There are other cults in Bengal and elsewhere differing in only minor details in faith.

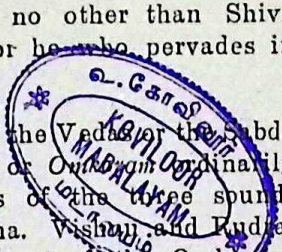
The use of such words as Rudra, Hara, and Shiva to denote the highest God is much earlier than the use of such words as Brahman, Atman, Paramatman and in fact it is observed that these words do not occur in the RigVeda at all to denote the highest God

The Supreme is adored as the Creator Hara as the Protector Sankara as the destroyer and reproducer Rudra and as the Bliss-giver Shiva.

There is one only Teacher who is Dhakshina-Moorthy. He is Lord Shiva himself appearing as Sat-Guru. He taught Sivagnana Botham to mankind.

Sri Kanta indicates in the definition of Brahman the identification of Him with Lord Shiva. Janmadi Sutra gives eight names of Shiva namely: Bhavai Sarva, Rudra, Isana, Pasupathy, Ugra, Bhima and Mahadeva. All these are shown to be applicable to Brahman as defined by the Sutra. Bhava signifies existence which runs through all things like a string. Sarva denotes the destroyer of all as also Creator of all. Rudra is He who drives away the misery of the cycle of rebirth. Isana is the possessor of unlimited Lordship. The name Pasupathy indicates both the relation of the Lord to the creatures whom He rules or guides and the bonds whereby He holds them. Ugra is the transcendent light that cannot be surpassed or eclipsed by any other. Bhima inspires fear in the minds of evil-doers. The Supreme Being is possessed of infinite splendour; hence He is Mahadeva.

The qualities required of Brahman by the definitions are amply met with by the qualities signified by the eight names which specially denote Lord Shiva. Brahman is no other than Shiva who is called *ashtamurthi* or he who pervades in eight forms.



The supreme mantra of the Vedas or the Sabda Brahma is the *pranava* or *Omkaram* ordinarily known as Om; compounds of the three sounds A.U.M. representing Brahma. Vishnu and Rudra. There is however a fourth part of the Omkaram called *hardha matdara* sound representing the supreme Brahman or Shiva—A.U.M.M.

It is out of His love that God punishes the wicked. He punishes those who do wrong and makes them mend their ways and do the right. All His acts therefore flow out of Love.

A man experiences periods of weakness and failure. He overworks and causes himself spells of illness. He is crushed by his enemies. It is at such times that he needs help. As the saying goes "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." But the spirit of the modern man is against such ideas; prayer and worship are out of fashion and he finds himself embarrassed to use such words in the modern "educated" circles.

Suicide is conclusive proof of the inadequacy of the suicide's religion. Surely he has a right to believe in something which can keep him alive.

Chapter IV

Soul (Pasu)

The Saiva Agamas postulate three distinct and separate entities—God, Soul and Nature (Pati, Pasu and Pasa or Mala) as co-existent and eternal, the soul and nature being energised by God as the Sun energises one lotus to bloom and another to wither. These three are called *Tripatarta* in our Saiva Siddhantam.

This is different from what Sankara's school of Vedantis say. They uphold Monism or Ekam and say that God is the only existent thing and that everything else is only His manifestation; soul is only part of the cosmic soul which is God himself; everything else is nothing but an illusion. Sri Kanta's school of Vedantis agree with us. Sri Kapila referred to by Lord Krishna postulates only Soul and Pasa as separate entities and enunciates how soul may free itself from Pasa, but makes no reference to the soul as ultimately joining God when it has attained freedom. This has been made up by his disciples.

Whatever the several schools of thought may say, they are mostly agreed in the main to the ways and means by which the soul should free itself from Pasa and attain Mukthi. We would therefore make no further reference to these

differences. Brihadaranya Upanishad says "God is to be heard and contemplated in the soul. He is the soul. His body is the soul. He penetrates into the recesses of the soul". "God and soul are the two birds which dwell in the tree (human body): One witnessing and the other eating the fruits enter into the heart, the excellent divine abode."

It may be noted that it is the soul and not the mind that seeks salvation. Mind is only matter though in a fine form.

Soul is an entity which cannot be seen, heard or felt by the senses. It is only inferentially that its existence can be proved.

Meykanda Devar to prove the soul's existence proceeds as follows: There is something which rejects every portion of the body as not being itself. It says 'my body'; it is conscious of dreams'; it exists in sleep without feeling pain pleasure or movement. This something we call soul and it exists in the body formed as a machine from matter (maya). As there exists something after it rejects everything else as not being the soul, it has to be inferred that this something is the soul.

The soul is not the material body, with which it is united. The body only enables the understanding to shine better, as the eye-glasses make the eyes see better.

As amongst the five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling, one sense cannot

feel what another can, and as there is something which feels all the five classes of sensations by means of those very senses, it is inferred that this something is the soul.

The four internal senses-*manas*, *budhi*, *chittam* and *akangaram* act only in conjunction with the soul. They act separately like the external senses and are not capable of performing the functions of one an-other. That which stands alone cognisant of all the four, is the soul. The senses have no activity except when in conjunction with the soul. Their saparate functions are treated elsewhere.

The soul is intelligent and that is noticed when it says "this is not the soul". The soul becomes conscious of one thing when it forgets another. Therefore the soul is different from God, whose consciousness is not subject to such a change.

Thus an intelligent soul exists different from Maya and God. The senses, the external and internal, while perceiving the object cannot perceive themselves or the soul, just as the eye cannot perceive itself. But they are perceived by the soul. Similarly the soul while perceiving cannot perceive itself and God. It is moved by the Sakthi or power of God when it understands with His aid.

The Agamas recognise tha tthe entire economy of present dispensation is under the control of God and is specially designed by Him

for the emancipation of the soul. God is *Vyapakaor* pervades in both Maya and soul and is in fact the guiding principle. It is not in the power of the soul to lead an independent existence, either it must remain in unwitting communion with Maya or in conscious fellowship with God. If it ceases to gravitate towards Maya, it must lean on God when His Grace will take it.

The soul, though sentient enough to know Maya, is not sentient enough to know God except with the help of God's grace.

The soul is sentient enough to know Maya and its nature. If it realises its transient nature, it is fit to shake off the Pasa Bantham (bondage) and by the Lord's Grace to cling to Him. The soul by nature is not independent. It has to lean on Maya or God. When it is enmeshed in Maya (*i. e.* the body) it identifies with it and when it gives up its attachment, to it it cannot stand alone, so it clings to God, who is ever ready to receive it and keep it as His body.

So long as the soul is in the meshes of Maya it becomes subject to successive births and deaths enjoying the fruits of good and evil Karma. After realising the transient nature of Maya, it recognises the true nature of God and get released from the coils of Pasam and by Lord Shiva's grace it merges in Him. There it attains eternal bliss and is in *adwaita* union with Him. A-dwaitanot two though yet two, as when the soul merges in the body

though they are separate, and as a vowel joins with a consonant. Thus when the soul gets into adwaita union with God, though separate it is one with God, just as a man identifies with his body though different and yet inseparable.

Without His divine presence and energy the soul cannot take for itself its material body and it cannot have progress unless when it is in conjunction with its material body which is allotted according to the law of Karma. It is in Him we live, move and have our being.

The goal of the soul is freedom, That is no peculiarity of our religion. We also have heavens and some hells too. If there are any heavens, they would be only repetitions of the world of ours in the bigger scale. A little more happiness and a little more enjoyment and all the worse for it. There are many of these heavens. Persons who do good work here with the thought of reward, when they die, are born again as Devas in one of their heavens as Indra etc. So say the Puranas. Devas are names of certain status; there will be thousands of Indras. Nahusha was a great king and when he died he became Indra. It is a position. One soul becomes higher and takes Indra's position and remains there only for a certain time, then dies there and is born again as man. But the human body is the highest of all. After working their good Karma, these Devas fall back and become human beings again. This Earth therefore is the *karma boomi i.e.* the land where Karma has to be worked out. It

is from here that we gain liberation. So even these heavens are not worth having, What is then worth having? Mukthi or freedom. It is Bliss beyond everything, unspeakable and indestructable.

Soul is sexless. Sex belongs to the body alone. The soul never ages; the ancient one is always the same. Our soul is neither born nor can it die. What is born and what dies is the material body formed of Maya (matter). *Guna* is associated with it from the beginning. Repeated births and deaths occur on account of the peculiar link between the soul and matter. No such links subsist between God and matter.

The Vedantis of Sankara's School and the Siddantis are greatly agreed on the several paths adopted to attain the liberation of the soul. They call them karm', bakthi, yoga and jnana. We call them charya, kiriya, yoga and jnanam and that Bakthi runs through them all. [See chapter on Bakthi.]

Siddhiyar says "God reproduces these worlds for the benefit of the eternally bound souls, to enable them to eat the fruit of their Karma and remove it.

"The soul is not self-dependent enough to secure the fruits of his works or salvation, himself.

"As the soul is attached to its form and organ (physical body) and is yet separate from the body, so also is God attached to the souls as His body, However the souls cannot become God and God does not become the souls.

"Soul enjoys only in conjunction with body and organ, place, time and order, action and object. The soul being bound cannot choose these of its own power. It is the Infinite Being, who by His Sakthi, brings about their union out of His Supreme Law. God gives a suitable body according to its Karma.

"The soul of limited intelligence knows when taught.

"God is gracious intelligence and soul is qualified intelligence which partakes of that Grace. God's intelligence is self luminous and illumines others and the soul is the one which receives such light and knowledge. Though God and soul are united inseparably, they are not one and the same.

"By means of mantras and other means set forth in the Shastras, one can secure endless powers, knowing past and future, but the knowledge of God can only be secured by the grace of the Guru and not by any other means.

"If one worships his gracious Guru as Para-Sivam, then Guru becoming God Himself will convert the disciple into His Form by means of touch, thought and sight in the same way as the fowl, tortoise and fish hatch their eggs by touch, thought and sight respectively."

Meykandar in his Sivagnana Botham says, "God exists in all the souls as one with them andthe souls as one in *adwaita*, with the Lord. Adwaita cannot mean oneness or *ekam* as without a second no one can think of himself as one, and the very thought

implies two things. The word simply denies the separate existence and separability of the two.

"God makes the soul eat the fruits of its Karma. The soul's good and bad Karma are induced by the Gnana Sakthi of the Lord. The soul joining the body caused by its previous Karma eats the fruit thereof. Similarily our present actions furnish the seed for our body in the next birth.

"The husk of the paddy is not new, but co-existed with the grain, so the three Pasa or Mala co-existed with the soul and were not acquired by it at any intermediate time. They undergo change in the presence of the Lord just as the Sun's rays cause one lotus to open and another to close. The souls are subject to re-births losing their previous forms.

"The souls passing at death from its present body into its *Sukshama sarera*, (the body it had already experienced in a dream state) undergoes its experience in Heaven or Hell (of the Devas) and forgetting such experience just as a dreamer, at the time of his dream, forgets his experience of the waking state, passes in its Sukshma state into a suitable womb at conception time, impelled thereto by the desire created by its previous Karma.

"The Lord appearing as Guru to the advanced soul instructs him that he has wasted himself by living among the savages of the five senses, and on this the soul understands its real nature, leaves its former associates and becomes united to the Lord's Feet.

"He appears as Guru in different forms-in His Divine form or human form.

"The contemplation of Sri Panchatcharam, is enjoined for freeing the soul of its hankering after evil.

"Consider all your actions to be those of the Lord. It is enjoined that the soul should perceive its actions to be those of the Lord as it will not act, except with His Arul, and in consequence, ignorance and Karma cannot enter it.

"The soul unites with the Lord's Feet, through unfailing love, as He, dwelling in each man inseparably, metes out to each according to his desert.

"Let the *Jeevanmuktha*, after washing off his Mala mix in the society of Bakthas whose souls in love, and contemplate their form and the forms in the temples as the Lord's form.

"It is pointed out that the society of Shiva Bakthas should be sought, as others will only impart evil.

"Worship Siva-gnanis and Siva-Linga as He shines brightly in theae forms, though He is present in every thing."

Chapter V

Pasa

Pasa is the bondage which binds the soul to worldliness. Pasa is also called Malam. Some call it Nature. Pasa is one of the three entities postulated by the Saiva Siddhantis. The other two are God and soul.

Pasa is generally divided into (1) Anava or ignorance or egoism attached to the soul (2) Maya or the ever-changing matter including the human body and (3) Karma or the good and bad actions which bear fruits following the law of cause and effect or the law of Karma.

It is Anava which blunts true intelligence and encourages egoism, pride and conceit in man. Maya confines the soul to a body with senses for enjoying things seen, heard &c.

Karma-malam follows the soul from birth to birth, as the soul eats the fruits of its actions. It is God who according to the inevitable law of Karma that adjusts the birth according to men's actions.

It is the dispensation of God that the soul is made to evolve from birth to birth to get rid of Malam.

Siddhiar says Anava is inherent in the souls but Maya is separate from them; as matter, it is a

a separate entity. Maya manifests itself as body, senses, worlds and enjoyments. When the soul is enshrouded by Anava and is without action it is in a state of darkness.

Lord Shiva out of His love sets the soul in evolution to get freedom by giving it the body and world for its enjoyment and experience whereby the inherent power in the soul is aroused and the soul gets into a state of action (Karma). Here Maya acts as lamp light helping the soul just to see and understand things around it. The lamp light is very limited in power. When Lord Shiva, as Sun light, is manifested, all darkness vanishes and there is no need for any lamp light. The soul is then fully lit with the Light of Truth.

Maya is matter pure and simple, but Anava and Karma are not. These two follow the soul from birth to birth.

God has no experience of Pasa as it ceases to exist before Him, like darkness before the Sun.

Pasa cannot know God as it is non - intelligent. The soul does not see itself when in union with the body senses. The soul will know itself when it forgets the senses, It reaches the Lord when it sees itself different from the senses.

One who reaches the Divine Guru, yet not separated from the senses, let him leave the knowledge of the senses by contemplation on the Lord who is not separate from him.

God will appear to the soul when it relinquishes the world—the Pasa. If the soul contemplates on Sri "Panchadcharam" (Sivayanama) all the remaining Pasa will disappear.

Consider all your actions to be those of the Lord and no act will affect you; that is to say there will be no Karma to be worked out by you.

The souls blinded by the senses, forget their real nature and the senses do not show the soul its own nature but put before it (the soul) their own impressions just like colours (the impressions) reflected on a mirror (the soul).

It is Pasa which keeps the soul in bondage. It is this bondage that we try to break off with Lord Shiva's grace and reach His feet.

The Tripatarta—Pati, Pasu and Pasa or God soul and nature—are three separate entities and they are eternal; Pasu and Pasa are energised by Pati, the all Supreme.

Maya is eternal but the bondage ceases when the soul gains freedom by the Lord's grace-Soul like rice in its husk, is never known to be separate from Pasa. They go together from birth to birth, until by Lord's Grace they are separated as rice is separated from its husk. When so separated the rice is never known to germinate. Just so when the soul is separated from Pasa, it knows of no more births.

Maya, Anava and Karma have different functions to perform in the evolution of the soul. Maya provides the physical body to man and the world for him to enjoy all its forms, beauties and attractions. Anava creates in him desire, lust and hatred to enjoy the world-Karma is work done with Anava. God makes him to eat all the fruits of his actions and to continue in his worldliness from birth to birth until he gains sufficient experience to renounce the fruits. The three sub divisions of Pasa are treatedin thefollowing three sub-secions.

I ANAVA

Our aim is to get rid of Anava which is nothing but ignorance and darkness and to realise that Maya is all delusion to us, and that work should be done selflessly for duty's sake or as a worship to God which naturally leads to Bakthi or Love to God. All this is energised by God designed to save us, step by step, from the meshes of Pasa and to lead us to receive His grace to attain Mukthi.

The word 'Anavam' in Tamil is nothing but arrogance. It is egoism or self-assertion. It emphasises 'I am the doer' and 'I can do anything I like.' As Siddhiar would put it it is nothing but ignorance and darkness. It is the want of knowledge to understand the real truth. It engenders lust,desire and hatred-three deadly enemies of man's spiritual progress. Pride of position, birth, colour, caste, book-learning, wealth are outstanding examples of Anava. A word about caste in this connection becomes essential.

It is only regrettable that differences due to caste by birth is common in this caste-ridden India. To claim superiority due to caste is clearly a bad case of Anava-malam as it is to claim superiority due to colour. To hate another of a caste considered low is also Anava-malam. It is equally so to hate another because he claims to be of a superior caste. For purposes of spiritual progress both are bad cases of Anava-malam which we should aim to get over. With that Anava-malam in us it is hopeless for us to get freedom for our souls.

Luckily, Shaiva religion knows of no caste and even today a godly man of any caste is an honoured guest in any good Saivaite's house, so much so that no one is interested to know his caste. There is no talk about his caste nor is he ever questioned about his caste.

In the period of the Rig Veda, there was no caste and in the subsequent period of the other Vedas, those learned in the Vedas were established as of the Brahmanical order-This may be said to be similar to the order of monks among Buddhists. The monks were not allowed to marry and could not have therefore created a caste by birth. But as those of the Brahmanical order were allowed to marry their progeny called themselves Brahmins and they are so only by birth.

Bhagavad Gita divides persons into different classes or varunas according to their Gunas. Those of the Thamasa Guna were prohibited from studying

the Vedas, as naturally their limited intelligence is not sufficient to understand the scriptures. But if such people come to a stage of understanding they can be instructed even the 'Panchadchara' Mantra says St. Appar. Manu provides for even a Brahmin to acquire auspicious knowledge from a Sudra and even the highest virtue.

We read of a Brahmin-Sudra and of a Sudra-Brahmin. The first name in the pairs shows the birth and the second the status as acquired. This shows that the divisions contemplated were of classes or orders and not of castes by birth.

The caste or class system of the North was never introduced into the Dravidian country which had its own divisions of community based mostly on the form of worship. The main divisions were called the 'right hand side' and the 'left hand side. There is no class or caste like Sudra in the South, nor are there Kshatrias, Vaisyas or Brahmins except by sufference. They have instead Rajas, Vethiars or Gurukals, Vellalas, Mudaliars or cultivators, Kammalas or the workmen. There is a report to say that the Kammalas considered the Brahmins who had come down from the North as lower than themselves in as much as they had no settled position. All that leads us nowhere, except to show that there is no reason for pride of caste and that it should be put down.

The most outstanding instance of this Anava-malam, the pride of caste and book-learning, is

found in our scriptures. Sakala Agama Panditar a Brahmin well-learned in the Agamas, was pointed out by Meykanda Devar to his pupils as a living example of Anava-malam. That touched the heart of the Pandithar who gave up his pride of caste and book-learning and treated Meykandar as his Guru. The Guru in turn recognised the change of heart and gave him the name of Arul Nandi Sivam. Meykanda Devar, a non-brahmin or not was the translator of Sivagnana Botham into Tamil and commentator thereof. Arul Nandi Sivam followed his teachings and gave us his commentaries called Sivagnana Siddhi. In his invocation he pays all his respect to his Guru. Both of them are now called Saints, and they deserve it.

Godliness knows no caste. It is only a stumbling block in the path of progress even of worldly progress.

The question of caste as understood to be by birth does not apply to Hinduism which is a universal religion bringing into its fold all races, white, dark and brown; and it is fast dying out says Swami Vivekanandha. He also says "Live in any caste you like, but this is no reason why you should hate one of another caste.

"Laws of Manu" was only a social code meant for the people of the North who lived several centuries ago. No caste of Manu's description is now in existence in any part of the world. Even if

there had existed any, they had lost it according to the interpretation of his Code.

All true Saivaites believed that there should be no barriers of caste. It was their conviction that a person is purified by Bakthi and not by birth in any caste or country that has made the Shaiva religion a cosmopolitan one.

As for caste, Sri Ramakrishna, a Brahmin by birth and priest by profession—is said to have broken it every day of his life. That is how he got over the worst of Anava-malam.

Aptitudes and professions or as Gita puts it, Guna and Karma, are the proper criteria for the status of Varuna. Mahatma Gandhi says "In the conception of Varuna there is absolutely no idea of superiority or inferiority. If I again interpret the Hindu spirit correctly all life is absolutely equal and one. It is an arrogant assumption on the part of one to say that he is superior to the other." We can say that this arrogant assumption is nothing but a bad type of Anava malam.

The 63 Shaiva Saints—Nayanmars as they are called—were from all classes, high and low, educated and illiterate; and they are worshipped by all castes. Like law, religion is no respector of castes.

All we can say now is that there should be no pride of birth or hatred thereby. It is the Guna that counts. Shiva himself says that he is the slave

of His devotees. All that emphasises Bakthi or Love of God, at every turn. Bakthan's position, is the highest from any stand point of view. He has no caste feeling. That is an ideal worth cultivating.

Upanishads say "He who sees variety and not unity in men wanders from death to death."

(2) Maya

Maya is one of the three Pasa or Malam. The other two are Anava and Karma.

Maya is defined as pure and simple insentient matter consisting of bodies, organs, worlds and objects of enjoyments created from the elements which were and are in existence from eternity. It may be noticed that Maya of the Vedantist of Sankara's School is nothing but a non-existent illusion. In other words, they say there is nothing like matter. They mistake a rope for a snake ignoring the fact that there should be a rope in existence to mistake it for a snake. This point is amply refuted by Sivagnana Siddhiar.

The created forms are ever changing but the substance or its elements are always there. Scientists would say that matter is never destroyed. Wood if burnt, there remains the gases formed and the ashes. That is to say wood has changed into ashes and gases and the elements are still there

ready to be absorbed by a growing plant or to be used for something else to come.

Maya is indestructible matter which is eternal but the bondage of the soul to Maya is not eternal, as it ceases to exist as soon as the soul gains freedom—of course by the Grace of God. The soul is co-existent with Maya, as rice with the husk, until separated and freed.

Look at the world as we see it. It is not a so-called perfect world which stands in need of no improvement and has no room nor call for change. Fortunately it is a world capable of endless growth which furnishes opportunity for souls' progress. Our world is friendly and helpful with an inspiring God.

Siddhiar says:—Maya is indestructible. It is non-intelligent. It is the cause of the soul's body and senses. It causes also delusion.

As the creative power of God is ever active the universe is ever changing within itself and the Soul is changing from one body to another.

When the sentient soul realises the transcience of the pleasures derived from Maya, it receives freedom through Lord's Grace and enjoys eternal bliss at His feet.

The bondage to Maya is due to ignorance, the consequent egoism and conceit, the hankering desire, the dislike and hate from unsatisfied desire.

The relationship of God, Soul and Maya may be likened to that of a hen, the embryo in the egg and the shell of the egg respectively. The hen energises the egg by brooding over it. The moment the sentient embryo has gained strength it breaks the shell and joins the hen. So does the ripen soul break off the bondage of Maya and join God. This again illustrates Siddhiar's philosophy. The soul is dependent on Maya and when it breaks off it has to lean on God as the chicken breaks off the shell and leans on the hen for protection.

God permeates the whole world and the universe and knows everything done in it, just as the brain knows the slightest pin-prick in any part of the body.

(3) Karma

Karma means work or action. Doing of work in this material world is part of life's completeness. Work is the essence of life. Desire is only a mode of the emotional mind which by ignorance seeks its delights in the object of desire behind the action. Siddhiar says:—By good Karma you do good to all sentient beings by bad Karma you injure them. The Lord understands your deserts and makes you suffer pain and pleasure accordingly. Good Karma or "Punniyam" tends to give pleasure to sentient beings. Bad Karma or "Papam" tends give pain to sentient beings.

We help others in taking the opportunity of doing good, an opportunity offered by their Karma, Karma does not command us to do this or that. It is by our exertion and free will that we work or do Karma while we are by the law of Karma eating the fruits of the past Karma. In Thiruvarudpayan we have if one regards actions as those of the Lord (as directed in Sivagnana Botham)he becomes freed of the results of the Karma whatever he may do and the Lord takeson his burdens. But until the soul attains this condition he must bear the results of his own Karma.

Sivagnana Botham says: God makes the souls eat the fruits of the Karma for them to gain experience and thereafter to renounce them. The good and bad Karma are induced by His Sakthi or Arul (grace). Some Karma may take effect or bear fruit almost immediately and some others after a long while or years or even births.

Gita says "Do thou perform obligatory actions, for action is superior to inaction. Even the bare maintenance of the body would not be possible if thou art inactive."

To work you have the right but never to its results. The performance of duty is Dharma in our scriptures.

We place full trust in the law and order of the universe. Its material causality is perfect and unbroken. Same causes bring about the same

effect. Fire burns today and tomorrow. It does not freeze on any other day—if so chaos is the result. All accept the law of nature. Religious men take it as beneficient work of God. It is a work of love followed by strict justice, perfect and unbroken. This perfect law is applicable to all planes mental, moral and every other planes. This is the law of Karma—the law of perfect causation. No one is exempt from it. This law applies to thought desire and action in all planes—in this or other births.

Our thought, desire, and action depend on our character which is then in our hands. Happiness depends more on character than on circumstances.

Man is a growing individual and under the law of Karma always finds himself in the circumstances best fitted for his future growth. All progress, as energised by God, depends on ourselves, upon the use we make of our opportunities. This doctrine is the antithesis of fatalism in which we are not called upon to consider the question of free will. It is enough we choose, all the time-We are choosing little things and great. The man who sits down, as he thinks by fate, is merely choosing to sit down and let things as they are. Karma is not a doctrine of fate, but a doctrine of freedom.

The partiality of one being born blind or dumb and another rich or poor is not the fault of God-By our own Karma we have created it. His grace and energy are eternal and unchangeable; it

is we that make the differentiation. This difference is explained by the acts or Karmas of the past births. The child has the burden of an infinite past, for good or evil he comes to eat the fruits of his past deeds besides building up good or bad Karma which may bear fruit in time. That is the law of Karma. We and no one else are responsible for what we suffer and act. We are free therefore.

Life is guided intrinsically by the Law of causation. Every action produces a reaction. It is therefore that we believe that all suffering and enjoyment are wholly due to our actions. The Vedas teach us how to do and act without being affected by its reaction. The process is the dedication of the fruits of the action to God. We should form a habit in us to do our work without any selfish motive. The only motive that may be allowed to sway our mind is a service of God. Disinterested performance means also worship of God.

Gita gives us two paths of devotion: "(1) the path of knowledge for the meditative and (2) the path of work for the active.

"By giving up action no one attains perfection. He who controls the senses and works excels.

"By performing action without attachment one attains the highest.

"Simply with the view for the guidance of the men thou shouldst perform action. What the

superior person demonstrates by action, that, people follow. One should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant attached to action.

"The religion of work when practised in a spirit of devotion without regard to the results conduces to the purity of mind. The man who is pure is competent to tread the path of knowledge and to him comes knowledge and thus indirectly the religion of work forms also a means to the Supreme Bliss."

The law of Karma is accepted as axiomatic truth by all the Hindus. The simple statement of the law of Karma is that he reaps as he sows.

The law of Karma is a unique and characteristic feature of our religious thought. Karma is a moral law corresponding to the physical law of causation. As a man sows so he shall reap. Every thought, every word and every act of his are, as it were, weighed in the scale of eternal justice.

Law of Karma tells us that we are at present the result of what we thought and did in the past : and what we shall be in the future will be the result of what we think and do now. On no other hypothesis can we explain the inequality of life that we see all round us. God is not partial and we carry with us our past.

We do not generally remember anything of our past lives because our conscious memory which

has its seat in the brain is stored only with the impressions acquired in our present bodies. But besides the conscious mind there is a huge unexplored sub-conscious region in which is stored all the past experience. It is this that is responsible for the working of the law of Karma. Our life and existence are like a vast educational system where the master allows his pupils to educate themselves by seeing the natural consequences of their actions while he is always present to advise, to help and to save. Therefore the law of Karma, free from filling us with despair fills us with hope. It teaches us that in the moral world there is nothing arbitrary.

If we do something wrong we have always the freedom to repent and retrace our footsteps. If we feel we have been too selfish in our doings we can always atone for it by self-less social service. Our scriptures call God the supervisor of the Law of Karma.

If a man surrenders himself entirely to God and totally forgets himself and his actions, Lord's grace can lift him away from the realm where the law of Karma operates. Behind the moral universe there is a Spiritual universe where all differences are reconciled, all conflicts between good and evil cease and all our sins melt away in His grace.

As the physical world is subject to the law of causation and the moral world is subject to the law of Karma, so the spiritual world is subject to the law of love and Bakthi.

Grace is the awakening of God in the human soul. It is not something that operates from without.

The only bond of which we have definite knowledge is Karma says Sri Kanta. Sri Kanta is none other than Sri NeelaKanta Achariya who has written a Saiva commentary on Vyasa's Vedantha Sutra.

It is beginningless just as its abode, the individual, is beginningless. It is an everflowing stream, the result of which is bondage to the cycle of rebirths. The differences of enjoyment noticed in human life are due to the respective Karma of the souls concerned. It is not a self-sufficient principle, for, though not originated by the Lord, it has yet to be directed by Him.

The Lord wills liberation to all, but His will is effective only in the case of those whose Karma has ripened, just as the Sun, whose action is impartial and uniform, can yet make only those lotus buds bloom as are ready.

Karma cannot bring about its own fruit, any more than service can bring about its own reward. The attainment of the the fruit of action depends on the grace of the Being in whose name the action is undertaken.

Even good deeds are productive of results undesired by him who seeks liberation and in that

sense, opposed to liberation. Previously acquired good Karma serves to secure favourable conditions for knowledge by creating sound health and so on and disappears with the death of the individual. Other good deeds which are practised as part of meditation or as contributory thereto do not cling, being performed without any desire for fruit.

When contemplation commences, accumulated Karma ceases to exist and future action fails to taint. Only that part of past Karma which has not begun to take effect is destroyed by contemplation

The lapse of knowledge at death is not final, but similar to the lapse of consciousnes during sleep; and the memory can serve us in good stead in the former case as much as in the latter.

Man's history is the history of his journey to the unknown in quest of the Suprene Being. The soul's outward course is never checked by death or dissolution. To achieve the unity with that Supreme Being, we may have to journey long and far but the end is sure, how widesoever we roam.

It is folly to try to reach God by flying from the world, say the great souls. We are not to become mere ascetics. One must have the courage to say "God is in this very spot and here at this very moment."

The coming of death is simply an event in the wonderful journey of life. When the cycle of births and deaths has taught us all we need to learn, we

have gained all the experience necessary to be ready for union with the Source of all.

Interested acts done as duty or as worship of God are no more so, but become disinterested. That is due to a change of motive.

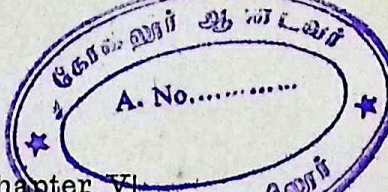
The doctrine of successive re embodiment of the soul is as old as the pre-historic people which ever existed.

A doctrine that declares that every action must bear fruit and that personal embodied life must continue again until the consequence is worked out is quite reasonable. It dovetails with all the natural laws which every scientist detects in the physical world. It certainly is more consoling than the idea that life is but a lottery where prizes are few and pitfalls are many.

The less passion there is, the better we work. The calmer we are, the better for us and the more the amount of work we can do. When we let loose our feelings we waste so much energy, shatter our nerves, disturb our minds and accomplish very little work.

The man who gives way to anger, or hatred or any other passion cannot work; he only breaks himself to pieces and does nothing practical. The great workers the world has produced were wonderfully calm men. Nothing could throw them off their balance.

The actor comes upon the stage, and plays the part of a beggar. Contrast him with the actual beggar walking in the streets. The scene is perhaps the same, in both the cases; the words are perhaps the same, but what a difference! The one enjoys his beggary while the other is suffering misery from it, and what makes this difference? The one is free and the other is bound by Karma. The actor knows his beggary is not true, and the real beggar thinks he has to bear it whether he wills or not. That is the law. Play your part in the universe as an actor on the stage.



Chapter VI

Bakti

Bakti is man's love of God, and the response of God to man's feeling is Grace. All Hindu saints teach us that Grace follows the cry of faith. Lord Siva's grace is His Sakti. Siva is Love, says Tirumular. His love is with us from beginning to end says Manickar. His Love is not selfish.

The mother's love will not suffer, even if the child misbehaves and does not deserve it. If we only return His love, then our salvation is assured.

It is by the light of His Grace, that He reveals himself to us, enlightens our intelligence and shows the way by which we can know and reach Him. and whereby He links us to Himself. All this Light and Love and Grace, Will and Power of the Lord are what are symbolized as His Consort, His Half, Uma, Parvati, Sakti and our Mother.

Love, whether selfish or not, connotes forbearance towards its object, no anger towards it, humility, self-surrender, service and all the good qualities towards its object. If love expects a return it becomes selfish, If no return is expected it becomes pure leading towards God and all beings. That is real Bakti.

Attachment and love towards our relations. friends, parents, brothers, sisters and wives are all Maya. "Daya" is love extending to all beings. Maya is self-love and Daya is charity.

Lord Krishna says:—There are four kinds of people who worship Him. The man suffering from some miseries, the man in need of wealth, the philosopher and the seer—All these are good people because they worship Him in some form or other—Of these Jnani is regarded as the highest.

Thinking of object of desire, attachment to them is formed, from attachment a longing, and from longing an unsatisfied desire grows—An unsatisfied desire is anger. His knowledge is steady, whose senses are restrained from their objects; and he attains peace.

Faith is the primary requisite of Bakti. Through contact with sages and devotees and study of devotional books comes admiration for the Lord. From admiration comes faith. From faith comes devotion to the Lord. By devotional practices he overcomes all obstacles to devotion. From those practices one develops devoutness. From devoutness comes the taste for hearing and chanting the name of the Lord. Then comes intense attachment which melts the heart. When attachment is intensified one becomes steadied in Bakti and when that is intensified he lives in the Lord. He thus reaches the state of Jeevan-Muktan *i.e.*, liberation while living.

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Faith is a rare flower plant cultivated in the garden of one's heart, nourished with the water of sincerity. The weeds of doubt and misgivings should be eradicated. Then it will strike a deep root, blossom and bear the fruit of devotion leading to Bakti.

Faith can be strengthened by "Sat-Sang" or contact with sages and devotees, prayer, self-purification, meditation and study of Scriptures.

We can march in the spiritual path only by placing implicit faith in the words of sages who have realized the Truth. Vedas declare "Know Him by faith devotion and meditation". Faith comes first, without faith we cannot practise either concentration or meditation.

Even under extreme trials and difficulties we should not lose our faith. Faith is our sheet-anchor. All obstacles and difficulties however great and powerful they may be, will vanish entirely before sincere and living faith in God. Peace, joy, freedom, immortality and Bliss will follow; therefore we should have genuine and living faith in the Lord.

Over-worked and wealthy business men had found their business had become their masters. Worry is spiritual short sight. Its cure is intelligent faith. Pleasure is our easy substitute for happiness.

Practical *sadana* (religious practices) is efficacious to the exclusion of vain discussions.

God and His name are one—Om- Om, Nama-Sivaya are all His names. Name checks the mind from wandering. It eradicates fear, sorrow and pain. Repeat the name without a break and sing the name with joy. A sage adds:—"Simply if you take the name of God and increase your devotion to Him intensely and establish some relationship with Him, you are sure to realize Him through the path of Bakti alone.

Moral purity is as essential to a Baktan as Faith—Faith helps the growth of Bakti—Moral purity is the foundation on which Bakti has to be built. The gulf between man and God cannot be crossed unless moral purity is attained. Morality is no substitute for religion. It gains its completion only in religion. True Bakti always strengthens morality.

Moral life does not cease to be progressive on becoming religious, We cannot think that the ideal of morality can be the conscious attempt to become the perfect self. To lay down what is good for ever, in ignorance of the situations that arise, is to perform something irrational. Morality does not consist in laying down primary distinction between good and bad. Some of the virtues which help a moral life are considered here.

Purity implies purity of both body and mind, both ceremonial and moral purity. The former is preliminary to the latter. All the purificatory baths and ceremonies and all the rules regarding food

and drink prescribed in our scriptures are meant to support purity of mind and spirit. It cannot be a matter of indifference from a spiritual point of view whether he is a vegetarian or a meat-eater, whether he drinks water or wine. According to Saivaism cleanliness is not exactly next to godliness, it is part of godliness. The cultivation of purity leads to another cardinal virtue self-conrtol.

Self-Control implies both control of the flesh and the control of the mind. To the class of sins of the flesh belong gluttony, drunkenness and sensuality of all kinds. The sins of the mind put on the guise of virtue before they attack us. Hypocrisy, pride and bigotry are easily mistaken for virtues. Self-control implies a whole group of virtues like patience, forbearance, modesty, humility, self-sacrifice and self-effacement.

Self-Conquest, when made an end in itself becomes mere asceticism, meant to suppress flesh. But that is also necessary for the ultimate liberation of the spirit. Here flesh is not merely suppressed, but it is taught its place. Mere asceticism is not what is wanted—The Shaiva religion takes into account all the factors of human personality—body mind, soul and spirit-and prescribes a graded, discipline for all.

Detachment:—The higher phase of self-conquest is detachment, another cardinal virtue. We have not only to overcome what is evil in life, but also be independent of good things in life. Our domestic affections, for instance, our family ties, our love for home and friends are all good in themselves, but

as long as we are blindly attached to these earthly things we are only on the lower rungs of the ladder. Love, affection and friendship are no doubt divine qualities; but the way to cherish them is not to be blindly attached to the particular objects of those feelings. We are taught to remove all taints of selfishness from our love by lifting it above the region of time and space towards the union with God.

Truth is another cardinal virtue. It is far more than mere truthfulness. 'Satyam' or Truth means eternal Being or what is true in knowledge, what is right in conduct and what is just and fair in social relations. God is the highest Reality. He is the source of all eternal values like righteousness, justice and beauty. "Satyam" includes *Ahimsa* or non-violence and the like.

Speak the truth at any cost. Truth alone triumphs but not falsehood. A truthful man is absolutely free from worries and anxieties. Truth is higher than the Vedas. Do not tell lies to get position, respect, name and the like. If you tell a lie punish yourself by fasting and japa with a repenting heart making a resolve not to make the same mistake again—Realize God by speaking the truth and observing truth in thought, word and deed. If you speak the truth for 12 years, say the learned, you will get *vaksakti* or "Siddhi" in speech, as all what you say will prove to be correct.

These are some of the forms of truth;—harmlessness, justice, equality, self-control, self-sacrifice,

forgiveness, fearlessness, absence of wrath, uncovetousness, modesty, chastity, absence of jealousy, absence of pride &c.

All these cardinal and other virtues are at bottom one, and constitute what we call virtuous character, Our character may be said to be in a way the condensation of our past history. It is with our entire past Karma, including the bent of our soul that we desire, will and act. The past constitute our personality which shoots, grows and ripens without c-asing.

Virtues, like religious codes of rituals, are more or less in the nature of commandments from external authority. Therefore the cultivation of virtues may imply a mechanical obedience to moral commandments. This of course, is necessary at the beginning as rites and ceremonies are necessary at the earlier stages of religious life. But soon the moral man has to act for himself. He has to decide for himself what is true, virtuous and just in the given circumstances. When he has thus acquired a virtuous disposition, he becomes a Dharmatma or a virtuous personality.

Among sins may be mentioned lust, hate and greed as deadly. Delusion, pride and malice are other sins.

Mere morality cannot abolish our sins. Religion should come to our rescue and by teaching and making us to seek refuge in the Lord it enables

us to leave our little selves behind and effect our salvation Our sages say that liberation is not through Karma or moral action, but either through Bakti, that is self-forgetting love of God or through Jnana, that is mystic realization of the unity of all things.

As long as one is confined to the region of morality one is subject to the Laws of Karma.

The genuine Baktan is above all laws, rules and dogmas. He cannot do wrong as wrong is not known to him. Our scriptures freely quote instances of great Baktas who have realized God by the direct route without spending their time in the wayside.

Narada Sutra may be repeated here :—"Worship God at all times with all your heart and your mind. Glorify Him in your heart and He will soon reveal himself to you and you will feel His presence".

Peace is a costly privilege—to be fought for and attained and won. It comes only from the conquered mind.

To waste time is to waste life, but to improve it with nursing over matters eternal is to improve life. Those who kill time may have to mourn it.

Leisure must be rightly used, must become an opportunity for spiritual return and not for noisy excitement if it is to profit us truly. Quietude is the beginning of wisdom.

The sister of solitude is leisure and its cousin is the country side. A wise solitude fosters the soul's growth, keeps the mind from petty thoughts and matures the fine quality of mental independence. Solitude is not loneliness. The Sage who sits in sublime harmony with the best thoughts and noblest ideals, though he lives in a forest is not lonely. Go now and again into some quiet wood or beside some gentle stream or sea, not only for restorative air, but also when you can search for beauty, light and truth. There you hear a truer voice than you could hear among men. You get a calm for the soul and an inspiration for living. Forests, hills, river-banks and gardens are places recommended by sages to their pupils as the best places in which to practise meditation.

Happiness comes from within and happiness is the daughter of truth—The spiritual man need not however be recluse. The unlon with the Divine may be achieved and maintained in the midst of worldly affairs. The obstacles to that union lie, not outside us, but within and as such is the central idea of the Vedas. In the midst of turmoil one must rest in the Lord of Peace, discharging every duty to the fullest, not because he seeks the result of his actions but because it is his duty to perform them.

To the man of meditation wishing to purify his heart leading to concentration, work is his way. After attaining concentration inaction is the way.

Meykandar says:—Giving up all fictitious ideas of God, the only way to know Him is by understanding with His Arul or Grace. Our understanding of Him till the final goal is reached will be fictitious or to use a better term, symbolical. The conception of God will only be symbolical. We introduce a real element into it when we introduce love and Bakti in our conception of God.

Bakti Shastra has analysed this conception of God with Bakti introduced into it, into several paths or forms and degrees and described the way and means to Bakti sadana. This conception divides itself into four natural paths or forms of reaching God that of (1) master and servant. (2) parent and child (3) friend and friend and (4) lover and beloved. All other conceptions of God can be reduced into these four. There are love and knowledge in all the four forms and paths. Bakthi is love and knowledge.

(1) As our Lord and master we do Him and His Baktas, loving service and obedience and reverence (2) To Him as father and mother, obedience and service and reverence and love in a greater degree are exhibited. (3) To the friend we say "I am he", "he is myself", "all mine are his" and "all his are mine", (4) Between the lover and the beloved there is the merging and identifying as one without separation.

To enable the Baktan to experience these four paths of reaching God, Siddhiar has enumerated

certain duties or acts which may help one to develop his Bakti from stage to stage, step by step. (1) Washing and cleansing God's temples, culling flowers and making various garlands for the adornment of God, founding flower-gardens and lighting temples, and praising God and obeying the commands of God's devotees, all these are the duties of the first *Dasa marga* (path of the servant). This is also called *Charya pada.* These duties are meaningless except as tokens of our love and as disciplining us to love God and his creatures more and more.

(2) Taking fresh and fragrant flowers, *Dupa* and *dipa* and food, purifying in all the ways, and establishing God's symbol, and invoking God's presence therein as all Intelligence and Light, and worshipping the same in all love and praying to God and praising Him; all these comprise the duties of the second *Satputra marga* (path of the good son) or *Kiriya pada.*

(3) In the third *Sahamarga* (path of a friend) or *Yoga-pada*, one has to control his senses, regulate his breath, fix his mind and dwell fixedly on the Supreme light. This involves *ahimsa* (non-violence) *Satyam* (Truth) chastity, contentedness, courage, taking little food and purity, reading and meditating on the Shastras, being cheerful etc. *Yoga pada* is described in some detail at the end of this chapter.

(4) In *the last Sanmarga* or *Gnana pada*, one studies Vedas and Puranas and after rating all other

knowledge as low holds on to the Truth, realizing what Pati, Pasu and Pasa are, melts his heart in Love and stands steadfast after entering His true presence.

The four paths or forms of religious practice are so arranged that one leads to the other. The forms and symbols of worship receive fresh meaning and fresh beauty as one progresses. As Siddhiar says the temple built of brick and mortar becomes the very soul and heart of the yogi in his meditation, and the SivaLinga becomes the Loving Presence and the light of the Supreme. The food offered as sacrifice gradually comes to mean the sacrifice of Anava (Self-pride).

The sacred Tiruvasagam, Devaram, Tiruvaimoli &c. furnish mental and spritual food to the illiterate and the most cultured minds.

Bakta Shastras point out the following three well-marked degrees in Bakthi.:—

(1) *External Bakthi* consists in the adoration of something external to ourselves. Our pilgrimages, our worship of images, symbols &c. are examples of this Bakti.

(2) The *internal Bakti* consists in the exclusive worship of the *Ishta Devata* in the heart. It clears the mind of any wrong ideas and gives healthy direction to the spirit of devotion.

(3) *Ekanta Bakti*—Here the worshipper o Baktan loves God for His own sake and not for His

gifts. In the other two cases, God is worshipped more for His gifts, material and spiritual, than for Himself. Ishta-Devata is the Deity of ones's own choice.

It is a doctrine of the Veda shastras that the religious teaching that is imparted to man should suit his spiritual competence. He is allowed to choose his own Ishta-Devata and make that the object of his adoration and love. The shastras freely encourage the use of images in worship, so that there may be something concrete round which man's devotion may centre. The substitute is not God, but only a means of making the mind of the Baktan dwell on God.

Bakti Shastras describe the ways and means to the worship of a Bakta as being external and internal—To the external class belongs offerings, vows, prostration, reading of sacred books, chanting of hymns, repeating of the Holy name and seeking of a guru; of these the last two are considered important-Meditation on the Holy name is considered to fill the soul with devotion in the same way as the worship of an image fills the worshipper's heart.

The internal means of Bakti are said to be renunciation, Jnana, inner worship and yoga. In fact, Bakti itself helps one in renouncing all earthly pleasures. It is not so much as our renouncing our worldly things that matters, as our despising them in our hearts, we have to eat and

drink and move amidst the objects of the world as long as we are in flesh. Only we should not indulge in these things. One should not leave his post of duty unless there is a higher call as once Lord Buddha is said to have felt. On the other hand, one should discharge his duty as a loyal servant of God in a spirit of self-sacrifice with no personal desire for a reward.

Our scriptures say that every kind of external worship should be followed by internal worship or contemplation, Upanishads say "The sacrifices which one performs with knowledge of faith and contemplations becomes more powerful."

Sivagnana Botham says:—Let the soul become one with Him and perceive all its actions to be that of His, then will it lose all its *Mala*.

The soul which says that there is no such thing as itself and that all actions are His, the Lord invites it to His feet and reveals His self to it. Thayumanavar says that Lord Siva under a banian tree by a dumb show of hand cured him of "acts" called "*my* acts" and placed him in Bliss.

Consider all actions to be those of the Lord Then none of the actions of the soul will affect it. He transforms His devotee into His own form, and yet He bears no ill-will to the rest.

Join the society of Sivagnanis as others will mpartevil. Join the society of Baktas and under-

stand with the light of God that they should be worshipped as Parameshwara. Then Karma will cease and Gnanam will rise.

Gita says notions of heat and cold, of pain and pleasure are born only of the contact of the senses with their objects. They have a beginning and an end. They are impermanent in their nature. Bear them patiently. The calm man who is the same in pain and pleasure, whom these cannot distract, alone is able to attain immortality. Of that which is born, death is certain, of that which is dead, birth is certain. Over the unavoidable grieve not. The in-dweller in the bodies of all is ever indestructible; therefore grieve not. As are childhood, youth and old age in the body to the embodied soul, so also is the attainment of another body.

Better indeed than blind repeated practice is Knowledge. Meditation with knowledge is more esteemed than mere knowledge; than meditation the renunciation of the fruit of action. Peace immediately follows renunciation

To a Baktan nc service to God and His Baktas was high or low in itself. The real test of Baktas consisted in two things (1) determination to carry the thing through in spite of all obstacles and (2 doing it without the expectation of any return.

Baktas attached greater importance to sincerety and righteous conduct than to doctrine.

Yoga-Pada

Yoga-pada, also called saha-marga (path of a friend), is the third of the four paths of the Bakti Shastra as described above.

Lord Krishna, the greatest of the Yogis, says: "What the yogis get by the process of concentration and what the Karmis realize by the process of disinterested work, the devotees can get by devotion to the Lord."

The word 'Yoga' is used in several senses in our scriptures—in the sense of power, prosperity, rule, devotion, endeavour, union etc. Yoga is used more in the sense of union in the upanishads and Gita *i.e.* to come into union with Him. This union may be effected by disinterested work or Karma Yoga, through loving devotion or Bakti Yoga and through spiritual insight or Jnana Yoga.

But 'yoga' in a technical sense is used to indicate not the goal of religions life, but the way. It is meant for restraining the mind for mental and moral discipline. The student of Yoga is required to abstain from slaughter, falsehood, theft, abstinence and possession. It also requires the observance of purity of mind and body, contentment, austerity, study of sacred books and prayer to God, These, abstention and observance, are meant more for the discipline of the student.

The student having had the discipline above mentioned goes to the next step consisting of the regulation of the breath. Apart from being a means to concentration of mind, this practice is beneficial to health; Respiratory exercises clear the lungs, steady the heart, purify the blood and tone up the whole system. The simplest type of regulation of breath is to draw in air through one of the nostrils, hold the nostrils closed for a few minutes and breath out slowly. Repeat it through the other nostril, all just a few times. If you wish to increase the number, advice of an expert is required lest it should lead to danger. This practice is said to lead to serenity of mind.

The next in yoga practice is to withdraw the senses from their respective outward objects. This helps contemplation. At certain stages of yoga practice one experiences super-normal powers (called *Siddhi*) of clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought-reading, thought-transmission and of knowing the past and future. Yoga Shastras clearly point out that these powers are obstacles in the way to the union with God unless they are disregarded and passed on. Possession of *Siddis* is not a sign of self-realization or spiritual advancement. We are asked to beware of charlatans. Yoga without Jnana or Bakti is dry and barren.

There are several kinds of Yoga practices. A *Hatha Yogi* starts his practice with his body and breath, a Raja Yogi with his mind and a Jnana

Yogi with budhi and will. Karma Yogi develops his hand and Bakti Yogi his heart. Raja Yogi studies his mind and makes it one pointed. Jnana Yogi removes the veil of ignorance and develops will and reason. All these are complementary to each other.

The practice should be accompanied by perfect faith and devotion. To prevent distraction one should have intense practice on one subject or thing. Select any object or form you like best and fix the mind there for sometime. The fruit of Bakti Yoga is Jnana Yoga, highest love or Bakti and Jnana are one.

The following are some of the several Yoga practices or Yoga sadana:—

(1) *Hatha Yoga* Sadana—The "*Kundalini*" Sakti which lies dormant lower down the body is awakened by special exercises. Heat is increased by retention of breath and Vayu *i.e.* wind, rises up along the spinal chord. This Yoga concerns with the physical body and control of breath. A hatha yogi gets different kinds of *Siddhi* when the "Kundalini." reaches different stages up the spinal chord.

(2) *Karma Yoga* Sadana—He who follows this path performs his duties and works in the ordinary way of life with the full consciousness of agentship, that is, with the sense "I am the doer" just like any other man, only denying himself the idea of enjoyer. He dedicates the fruits of his actions to

God or the common good of mankind. He thinks he is worshipping God by the performance of his duties. Gradually he realizes that the actor and enjoyer is the Lord. With the dawn of this consciousness he gets into the second stage which is practically the same as Jnana Yoga.

(3) *Bakti Yoga* Sadana. Those who follow the path of devotion should do 'japa' and read holy scriptures. They should observe modifications of the mind, sustained practice and do prayers and *Mana* pooja. It is also service to guru and other Baktas.

(4) *Raja Yoga* Sadana—This is called a kingly science, supreme purifier, intuitional according to righteousness and very easy to perform. It is said to be the greatest of the Yoga Sadanas. In Raja Yoga there is no struggling with the breath or the physical body. The yogi sits at ease, watches his mind and silences the bubbling thoughts. He stills the mind and restrains the thought-waves and enters into the thought-less state or Samadhi.

(5) *Jnana Yoga* Sadana—Those who take up this path should acquire discrimination between the real and unreal, indifference to sensual enjoyments and wishes. Then they approach a guru who has realized God and hear Srutis from him. Then reflect and meditate on God and eventually attain Him.

The various conceptions of the Yogi are pronounced to be fictitious or symbolic. Siddiar says:—

"If God can be meditated, then as an object of our senses He becomes Asat (matter.) If you contemplate Him as beyond contemplation, even then it gives you no benefit, as it is a mere fiction. Giving up these fictitious ideas of God, the only way to know Him is by understanding Him with His Arul or Grace" which is ever available when you have realized the transcient nature of Maya.

Chapter VII

Divine Worship

Divine worship is the acme of all moral virtues. Bakti is the depth-finder of worship. Worship is the highest Nivirti-Karma (*i. e.*, to get freedom by work) for a soul if it wishes to dissociate itself from Maya and reach God. Disinterested work is divine worship. By a change of motive interested work becomes disinterested, that is, when it is done as duty or as worship of God. Worship is not only a science, but is also an art and has a rationale about it. Worship must first be borne in the mind and ripen in the heart. This finds expression in words and is enhanced in effect by the bodily deed. Thus mind, word and deed join in the worship. Worship mental is no doubt the dominant factor. Others are accessories and faithful servants in the service of worship. Worship with a pure heart leads to salvation and that salvation is for the soul and not for the body. Thus the service of worship consists in that the soul has a desire to extricate itself from its bondage and reach a stage of eternal Bliss.

If the heart melts into worship let no metaphysics restrain it. Brain work has certainly its own virtue, but if it kills the love between man and God it ought to be curbed. There is solidarity in man which the heart bespeaketh, whichever sort of philosophy he may profess.

Mere science of worship is of little practical value to mankind. But when theory is applied to practice mankind welcomes it. The practical side is seen in the worship of God in temples or suitable places, showing the instinct of worship reduced to and finding expression in art. In the same way, as mind, speech and body unite in worship the larger man-kind wishes to congregate for worship. This instinct cannot be ever satisfied but by temples and such other popular institutions and soul-inspiring rituals connected therewith. Worship ripens into Bakti.

The rationale about worship is based on the fundamental idea, that the all-pervading character of Lord Shiva, and the function of His sustaining Sakti, manifest his Divine presence for the sake of the worship in any object the worshipper may lovingly choose. The manifestation may be expressable by allegory. The general presence is like that of heat, latent in a piece of wood, whereas His special presence is like that of a visible fire of a heated iron-ball. The heart when worked up to the required heat can feel His presence.

A worshipper lovingly chooses the image of an object of his imagination as the Deity of his worship. Deities like Vishnu, Subramania, Ganesha are given some forms with head, hands and feet. But in the case of Lord Shiva no such forms have been adopted. A Linga which is only a symbolical figure has been adopted to represent the universe

with Him pervading it. The word 'Linga' is from "Lik" meaning "write or describe"; hence a symbol. The Siva Linga resembles a pillar and represents the spiritual plane wherein all ignorance is lost and the soul is enlightened. Being synthetic in form, it is suited for the worship of more advanced souls.

The images found in most of the Saiva Temples were made according to the rules found in the Agamas and Tantras, symbolizing one or more of the aspects or attributes of God. They are meant as help for contemplation and external worship. Temples are very ancient institutions though only less ancient than the Vedas. The astronomical significance of the temple symbolism runs in the Agamas side by side with the spiritual import.

One of the most comprehensive of images is that of Nataraja. The hand that bears the drum symbolises creation. The hand turned towards the worshipper represents the sustenance of the universe. The third having fire, indicates involution of the universe. The foot that crushes the dwarf symbolises the love of God which counteracts the power of *Anavamalam*. The uplifted foot stands for eternal Bliss and the fourth hand points to it. The eye in the forehead is the light of pure knowledge which dispels ignorance. The ordinary eyes are made to represent the desire to do good. The contemplation of the image includes contemplation of both God and soul. The image is a perpetual sermon.

The Saiva image of God's Sakti is *Uma*. It represents a mother with four hands.

The image of Vinayaka (Ganapati or Ganesha) makes a partial representation of God as the Lord of the universe. Of the protasis of the Elephant, the straight portion represents the universe of knowledge and the bent portion the universe of motion.

Bhairava image instils the thought that we should not give first place to worldly affairs and second place to God. The image indicates the insignifiace of man and the greatness of God.

The image 'VeeraBhadra impresses us not to give first place to our worldly Superiors but to give that to the Lord.

When man wants to submit himself to God for his guidance and control he goes to Lord Subramania. His image is more comprehensive than even that of Nataraja, because it represents the Guru as well as God. It has six faces,which represent respectively the Lordship of the universe and the five great actions of God—creation, sustenance, destruction, counteraction of worldliness and the illumination of the soul. The 12 hands represent various attributes. One of these holds the javelin which is the symbol of pure knowledge.

The holy ashes which every Saivite wears represent the love of God. Fire has burnt the cow-dung, removed its impurities and has changed it into a beautiful form. So the Love of the Lord

nullifies the power of *Anavamalam* and makes the soul divine. The wearer is made to feel that the Love of the Lord is on him.

Granting images, we do not worship the mere idol, but the idea embodied in and underlying it. Just as a soldier is prepared to lay down his life in defending his flag knows that the flag in itself is a bit of painted cloth, but that it stands for something that is dear to him, so every worshipper knows that the image in the temple is in itself a piece of wood, stone or metal, but that it stands for something he holds sacred and eternal. The scriptures say that the *Pratishta* or the substitute is not God but only a means of making the soul dwell on God.

We need image worship and rituals, but in varying degrees, until the end which the ritual is designed to secure is gained. The Sanyasin for instance requires neither image nor rituals. The ultimate object of ritualistic worship is the realization of God. It is achieved by the gradual transforming of the worshipper into the likeness of the worshipped Deity. The first step is to dwell on some concrete form and overcome distraction. In invoking God we do not make Him to come. He is always present. What is done is to modify the mind of the worshipper to understand that He is there.

The worship (pooja) itself may be external with flowers, incense and camphor or it may be internal with prayer and meditation. He may

meditate on his *Ishta-Devata* internally through *Japa*. *Japa* is the repetition of a *mantra*. A mantra is an embodiment in sound of the Devata. It is not a mere formula, nor is it a magic spell. It is the Devata itself. When the mantra is repeated with concentration of mind the human power is supplemented by the Divine Power.

A prayer is different from the repetition of a mantra. Prayer may be offered in any language in any form. Mantra being an embodiment of a Devata in sound has to be repeated in the form revealed to the Rishis. It has to be learnt from a Guru. The continued thought and repetition produces a change in the worshipper. As the Upanishads say "a man becomes what he thinks".

The Agamic rites are connected with the worship of the images either in private houses or public temples. The Vedic rites are generally of the nature of sacrifices (Gojana), whereas the Agamic rites are generally of the nature of *puja* or worship. He who sacrifices the lower self which is attached to the earthly things realizes his higher self. *Puja* or meditation which may begin with a petition ends in communion with God. Both rites have the same end in view.

Without ritualism no religion can stand; we may say ritualism is only the husk of religion. But without the husk the grain will not grow. If husk is removed life goes out and the sowing of the grain without the husk is in vain. Thus has ritualism some vital function in religion.

We must also keep in mind that ritualism tends to make religion mechanical and static. When belief changes ritual also should change with it.

Our temples and images are the stronghold of our philosophy and religion. Temples are transmitters of tradition and cherished associations. It is one abode which in sorrow we seek for refuge.

To Baktas who find satisfaction in formal worship, Appar Swamigal says: Regard your body as the temple, your mind as the worshipper, Truth as purity needed for worship, the jewel of the mind (*mana mani*) as the Linga, Love as the ghee, milk flower &c. and perform puja to Isa thus. Great sage described Siva as Him who lies down in the form of Prana Linga in the cavity of the heart. 'Si' in Siva is also interpreted to mean 'Lie down' The cavity of the heart is the chief abode of God.

Tirugnana Sambanda Swamigal urges people to worship God and thus relieve themselves from earthly fetters. He glorifies 'Holy Ashes' and Panchadcharam.

Kalagni Rudra Upanishad and another Upanishad prescribe the proper way to use the Holy ashes and how to prepare it out of cow-dung with the chanting of proper mantras. It is the learned in the mantras that should make it say the Upanishads. They further say that the proper use of the Holy ashes promotes worldly happiness and after death makes one reach *Sayujia* of the Lord Shiva (mukti.)

The Atharvasikha Upanishad enjoins 'Om' or the name of 'Siva' the giver or Bliss, to be meditated upon.

Panchadcharam (*i. e.* the five letters Si, va, ya, na, ma) is the mantra imparted by the Guru to his disciple at the time *Siva deeksha* (initiation ceremony) That is an initiation in the Truth and central mantra of all the Vedas. Steadfast contemplation on it sheds the bondage of Pasa and destroys it in due course.

Urudraksha Jabala Upanishad describes the use of the beads, *Urudraksha* with several faces. A good one produces a golden line when rubbed on a rubbing stone. It is recommended for the devotees to wear, so that worldly and heavenly happiness may be achieved.

If we begin to lead a religious life we shall be able from our experience to add to or substract from the list of the religious practices prescribed by the old masters.

All Sadanas (religious practices), all the reputation of being called pious men are of no avail without the grace of the Lord. We can deceive the world, we can deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive Him. He sees through all our pious prayers and studied poses. He sees what sincerity there is in our hearts and sends His grace accordingly.

It is in sincere Bakti that religion exists and not in ceremony—that is in the pure and sincere love in the heart. Unless a man is pure in body

and mind his coming into a Temple and worshipping God there is useless.

External worship is only a symbol of internal worship, but internal worship and purity are the real things.

He who sees God in the poor, in the weak and in the diseased, really worships the Lord. And if he sees Lord Shiva only in the image, his worship is preliminary.

Those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants.

He who has more unselfishness is more spiritual and nearer to the Lord; whether he is learned or ignorant, whether he knows it or not, he is nearer to Siva than any body else. Sivagnana Botham says:—Worship not accompanied by *Pati gnanam* (Godly Gnanam) is futile.

Mundaka Upanishad says: The symbolic worship (sensory and mental) is required as Sadana (religious practice) for the human soul. These are acts of preparation.

Lord Krishna in Gita says:—The first thing to do is to resolve to worship God. That means you have taken the correct path. If even a wicked person worships Me with the devotion to none else, he should be regarded as good, for he has rightly resolved. The man who has got beyond the three gates of darkness, viz, lust, anger and greed practises what is good for himself and thus

goes to the goal supreme. There is no salvation except through the conquering of desires and no man is free who is subject to the bondage of matter.

Saivaism is non-dogmatic and its adherents possess as a rule what may be called good spiritual manners. An organised religion or church is hostile to every belief which is opposed to its own creed. That church cannot allow liberty of thought within its borders or even without. It is obliged to enforce beliefs and persecute unbeliefs on principle.

Saivaism has its ritualistic as well as the philosophic side. Ritualism is determined by the Agamas and Tantras and is followed in most of our temples. But in Chidambaram pure Vedic rituals (propitiatory and sacrificial) are said to be followed. The Vedic rituals refer to sacrifice of the lower self of man in *Homa* fire. The Agamic rituals refer to Bakti worship with flowers, leaves, milk, honey &c.

In the Rig Veda the word 'Shiva' is used as an adjective as well meaning "gracious". Shiva is also mentioned there as the "God of Gods" and "Shirapirati" meaning 'readily understanding' 'accessible' 'gracious' and 'He by whom life is conquered'. In the Yajur Veda, the Lord Supreme is 'expressly called 'Shiva' Rudra is also called 'Shiva, Sankara, Sambu, Isa, Bhagavan, Pasupati, Mahadev, Maheswara' etc.

'Pooja' is the common term for ritual worship. It includes Archana, Vandana, Bajana etc. (Vandana is namaskara or prayer).

We see Krishna manifesting the powers and form of the highest Lord, because of His having indentified Himself with the Lord in Yoga.

No Saivaite has any prejudice against the worship of Vishnu or other Deities, nay he worships them in their temples or churches and in such worship he worships them as Lord Shiva Himself and not as anything else.

The object of the worship is the Ishta Devata as Lord Shiva, Devi, Vishnu and His avatars as Rama, Krishna &c. An object or image is used in the outer pooja; Linga—a symbol is used in the worship of Shiva.

Manasic pooja or pooja in the mind is more powerful than external pooja with flowers &c. Arjuna did external pooja to Lord Shiva; Bhima did manasic pooja to Him.

The Agamic image is a perpetual sermon, initiates religious contemplation and serves as a suitable form for long and continued adoration. It allures the mind to God and attaches it to Him. The mind is then filled with the thought of God and the body influenced by the mind becomes the tool of God. The tongue sings praises of God, the body prostrates before Him, and the mind goes into ecstasy at the thought of Him. The man loses his individuality and is possessed by God.

Every Agamic image has a perpetual sermon in symbolic language to preach to the worshipper.

In the most comprehensive image of Nataraja, the first hand tells the worshipper that God has given him his body and habitation for his benefit, and that he should make the best use of them and of his time. He must use them in the service of God and not in securing fleeting and harmful pleasures of tne senses. The second hand is the hand of hope, indicating that man need not fear anything but should work for his salvation. The third hand warns him of the uncertainty of life in this world, that the body may perish at any time, and that he should not postpone his useful activities but work while he may. The foot that rests on the dwarf wants the worshipper to imitate it and crush with his wisdom the **anavamalam** and all the wrong desires created by it. The fourth hand and the uplifted foot say that his destination of infinite Bliss is within his reach. The smile engenders the love for God and the three eyes exhort the worshipper to *think* correctly, *desire* correctly, and *act* correctly. The third eye further indicates that it is there to help him in destroying wrong desires.

The sermon briefly is as follows:—God by His Sakti has selected you this body according to His Law. He is the hope of your life. The life may pass off at any minute. Therefore without waste of time put your foot on **anavamalam** which is at the bottom of all evil, and look around and act well so that He may destroy the effects of your Karma and by His love and Grace enable you to attain eternal Bliss.

Chapter VIII

Sivagnana Botham and Sivagnana Siddi
A summary.

The text of Sivagnana Botham is the 12th Chapter of the 73rd Section of Papa Vimochana Padalam, of the Raurava Agama, one of 28 Saiva Agamas. It consists of 12 couplets or Sutras said to have been revealed to the great Saint Nandi as the essence of the Agamas. It was translated into Tamil by Meykandar who also added to it a commentary. This was expanded by his disciple Arul Nandi in his Sivagnana Siddhiar.

The 12 Sutras may be divided into 4 sections containing 3 sutras each. The first two sections are general and the other two are special in character. The first section establishes the existence of God Soul and Maya, the second gives us their attributes. the third deals with their special characteristics and the religious practices required to obtain wisdom and purification and the fourth section shows the true end to be sought and the way to destroy Mala by worship etc.

In this small compass of 12 couplets we find all the essentials of a well-balanced religion. In the first 6 sutras we find all our Saiva Siddanta Philosophy embodied. Sidhantham means the final result arrived at or proved logically. Sivagnana Siddi (or Siddiar) consists of similar sutras 12 in number written by Meykandar's disciple, Arul Nandi Devar.

Section I. Sutras 1, 2 & 3.

This section deals with the first three Sutras of Sivagnana Botham and Siddhiar. They establish the existence of the three entities: God, Soul and Pasa by logical process.

Before we proceed to prove God's existence we should know what is meant by God. The first Sutra defines God as the First cause of all the changes we find in the world. All that we see before us are living beingsand matter. They can be denoted by the pronouns He, She and It (male, female and neuter); we see how beings are born how they grow and die- So do we see a plant germinate, grow and die Water changes into cloud which in turn comes down as rain. Thus we see the world before us undergoing changes always. Matter being inert it cannot cause the change. The cause is not in themselves. All these entities require an ultimate and efficient cause to produce the changes of origin, development and decay. That is the first Lause.

Here it may be noted that this Sutra deals with the world, the living being in it and the first cause in the most general terms. The later sutras go step by step into greater detail. The first sutra in Siddiar says:—As the world undergoes changes a first cause that can effect these changes is essential. That first cause is Hara.

In the first Sutra our attention has been drawn to the actual things we see around us, namely the

world and the living objects in it. In the second sutra we are shown the relation of the First Cause to the rest. To understand that relation we have to know something definite of the living beings in the world and of the world itself. We find that in the 3rd Sutra.

Among the living beings we notice something beyond matter. In it we notice something active, with power to know things through the organs of sense like the eyes, ears, nose which are also formed of matter. This something we call Jiva or Soul; it cannot be seen. In us there is something which rejects every portion of the body, portion by portion as not being itself. It says this is my body. It is conscious of dreams and it exists in sleep without feelings of pain and pleasure or movements. It is this something we call soul.

As there is something after it rejects everything else as not being the soul, we establish that this something is the soul and that it exercises some intelligence when it says "this is not the soul."

We have come to know by inference that there is a First Cause of all the changes, actions and movements in the world. That presumes that the First Cause whom we call God, should have some power in itself to bring about these changes, actions and movements. That power we call *Sakthi*. Thus God is acting in conjunction with His Sakthi. That Sakthi has to be exercised with

intelligence. This intelligence we may call wisdom or gnanam. Thus God's Sakthi may be called Gnana Sakthi.

We now turn back to sutra 2, which seeks to show the relation between God, soul and the world. World is called Maya or matter.

God being the First Cause, He exists in all the souls or with the souls. He is one with the souls and at the same time different from them. The souls are not the First Cause.

God as the First Cause, exercises His Gnana Sakthi to enable the soul to take to one material body or another and to a new body after the dissolution of the previous body. He also energises the living body, just as the Sun energises the lotus to bloom or to wither, to do acts which may turn out to be good or bad.

The husk of the paddy is not new to but co-existent with the grain; so does Maya co-exist with the soul and was not acquired by it at any intermediate time. These undergo changes in the presence of God as the Sun's rays cause one lotus to bloom and another to fade.

The soul is able to answer that the body is his and to feel pain and pleasure when not in a state of sleep and to do acts, all energised by God. Thus the soul in the body exhibits a quality of asserting "It is I". That quality is called Anava or egoism. The soul does acts; and acts naturally produce

effects. The soul shows a liking to enjoy the effects of its acts, or "Karma." The two "Anava" and "Karma" and the third "Maya" go by the common and generic term "Pasa" or "Mala". This "Pasa" like the husk of the paddy and the grain in it, co-exists with the soul from the time of the first cause which is eternal.

It is these three, namely, soul, "Pasa" and God that are called "Tripatarta" (the three substances) postulated in Saiva-Siddantham as three separate and eternal entities.

The corresponding second and third Sutras of Siva-gnana Siddi put the same thing in another form. God is one with the soul different from it or one-and-different. He is the light transcendent. He guides the soul in obedience to His Gnana Sakti and each one's Karma. He is self-luminous and second-less. He is free from Mala. He pervades all. There exists a soul separate from the body to which it is united. It wills, thinks and acts. It becomes conscious after dream. It experiences pain and pleasure. It undergoes several states or conditions of wake-fullness, dream-state etc. When at rest, it is in the state of utter inertia.

Section II. Sutras 4, 5 & 6.

This section deals with further attributes or relationship of God, soul and the world.

The 4th Sutra speaks of the soul in its relation to the internal senses (Andha Karana) Manas, Budhi, Chittham and Akamkara. The 5th Sutra is on the relation of God, soul and body. The sixth Sutra is on the nature of God and the world.

It has been established that the soul is not the body nor its external senses. Now sutra 4 goes to show that it is not the internal sense either. The internal senses are ;- (1) Manas which is a faculty of the mind as exercised after perception by the external senses. (2) Budhi or reason. (3) Chittam which is the exercising of the will regarding the perception and (4) Ahankara which is self-assertion due to pride. These four senses go by the generic term Andakarana and they perform different functions. One is not capable of performing the function of another. There is something which stands above and cognizant of the four. That something is the soul and it is not one of the four which have no activity except when in conjunction with the soul.

In the course of perception the soul as Chittam considers, as Manas it doubts, as Ahankara it concludes wrongly and as Budhi it determines properly. The soul cannot understand when Anava-Mala darkens the soul's light or intelligence. Then it is like light or fire present latent in firewood.

Similarly, the soul is not one of the states or conditions such as dreaming, waking, sleeping etc. called "Avasta".

The relation of God, soul and body to each other is enunciated in the 5th Sutra. The soul is moved by Arul-Sakthi (Grace) of God, as iron is moved by the magnet, while He Himself remains in movable and unchangeable.

The senses preceive objects only as instrument of the soul. They cannot perceive themselves as the eye that sees cannot perceive itself. If the soul is not active, the eye cannot see.

The senses cannot perceive the soul while they are perceived by the soul which again is energised by God's Sakthi.

The soul while perceiving the senses cannot perceive itself or God. The soul cannot have consciousness except throuth the senses. The soul understands with the aid of God's Sakthi. The soul knows the world only according to its Karma with the light of the Lord.

Without Him, Sakthi does not exist and He cannot be without Sakthi. He and His Sakthi appear as one to the Jnani as the Sun and the light appear as one to the eye.

The 6th Sutra deals with the nature of God and the World. "Sat" is a word used to denote God and "Asat" to denote not God *i. e.* the World. These words are often met with in the other Sutras. Literally "Sat" means that which lasts for ever.

It is He that makes the soul see. The soul's understanding cannot comprehend and point Him out to the soul just as the eye which the soul enables to see cannot see the soul.

Maya is object, soul is subject. The object cannot perceive the subject. Otherwise the subject will become the object. God is true subject and Maya and soul are objects, and hence Maya and soul cannot perceive God. The Divine light must penetrate our soul and then we can discover Him dwelling in ourselves.

The 4th 5 th & 6th Sutras of Sivagnana Siddi are the same thing again. They say :—The Soul stands apart from the internal senses. These senses do not cognize each other's operation. Each in fact performs a different function. The Soul understands all, controls all, is in union with them and brings them into action in the various condition and states: It has a consciousness of "I" and "mine". The senses can understand only with the aid of the soul and yet cannot know the soul. So also the soul can only understand with the grace of the Lord and yet cannot know Him. The all-knowing Shiva alone knows all and imparts knowledge to all.

God is not an object of cognition or knowledge. There is no use of God if he could not be known. The only way to know Him is by understanding Him with His Arul and Grace. The all-pervading Shiva is pure intelligence and pure existence.

All the above 6 sutras give us Saiva Philosophy as proved. That which has been proved is called Siddhantam. Thus the above is the general outline of Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy. The next six forming the third and fourth sections are said to be "special" giving us the practical side of Saiva Samayam with the above Philosophy. as the back ground.

Section III. Sutras 7,8 & 9

This section deals with some characteristics of the soul which enables it to profit by instruction and religious practices (Sadana), the way in which the soul obtains wisdom and on the purification of the soul.

The seventh Sutras of Sivagnana Botham and Siddhi may be summarised as follows:- Asat (Maya, ignorance or darkness) cannot appear before Sat as no darkness can subsist in the presence of light. Asat (Maya) is merely material instrument of knowledge of another. The soul when taught can know Sat by His grace and Asat by association as in the body. But the soul is neither Sat nor Asat; *i.e.* it is neither part of God nor of matter (Maya). Thus it may be called sat-asat. It is eternal and is not produced from either. In the condition of bondage of Pasa, the soul appears only as Asat and when the bondage is removed freedom is obtained and it then appears itself but as Sat or Sivam.

The eighth sutra of Sivagnana Siddhi gives the illustration of a king's son taken and brought up among savages. The son does not know who he

is. The king comes and separates him from the savages, teaches him his identity and takes him home and gets him respected even as himself. Just so the Lord appears as the gracious Guru before the sorrowing soul separates it from the savages of the five senses which stopped the soul from knowing its greatness and the Guru purifies and transforms it even unto His own glory and places it under His flowery foot.

Sivganana Botham puts the same thing as follows:—The Lord appearing as Guru to the soul which has advanced in Thapas (*i.e* religious ansterity and knowledge) instructs the soul, which begins to understand that it has wasted itself by living with the savages of the five senses. On this the soul begins to understand its own nature, leaves its former association and being not different from Him becomes united to His Feet. Thapas includes and means the religious practices of Charya, Kiria and Yoga, the three out of the four paths of Bakthi. The fourth path is Gnana Marga. The souls obtain wisdom or Jnana by Thapas.

He who comes as Satguru is Shiva himself. The soul does not see itself when in union with the five senses. The soul will know itself when it forgets them.

The Guru gives the instructions by mere look, by mere touch or by teaching.

For purification of the soul, the 9th sutra gives the prescription. The soul can perceive Shiva only with Gnanam. It cannot perceive Him by the

human senses and faculties. It can perceive itself with the same Gnanam, knowing Pasa to be false. Then it will rest with the Lord. The soul is enjoined to contemplate Sri Panchadchara according to Law, lest it should fall back.

Siddiar says: If you regard the world as a mirage and get free from its clutches, you can reach Him. If you again meditate properly on Sri Panchadchara He will graciously enter your heart and drive away your darkness.

Mere extinction of the senses is no Moksha. Divine Grace should follow to give you Moksha. Internal worship of Him in the heart is considered a Mukthi sadana. (Sadana is spiritual or religious practice). If one thinks of Him with Gnana, impurities will vanish.

External worship with flowers, praising the Lord in some visible symbol, thinking that he himself is not responsible for good and evil, then he will gain great merit of superior Bakthi. This worship would enable him to get Lord's Grace and to remove his Mala when He will convert him into His own form and dwell in Him in all His glory.

The Lord will appear to the soul when the latter relinquishes the world. By contemplating on Sri Panchadchara and doing pooja to the Lord in the region of the heart and contemplating on Him, the Lord will appear to the soul and make it His servant, just as iron becomes fire when heated. The Arul Sakthi of the Lord rests in the Heart.

Section IV. Sutras 10, 11 & 12.

This section shows the true end to be sought and gained by mankind. In doing so it shows the way of destroying Mala the way by which the soul unites with the Lord and explains the mode of worship of God who surpasses powers of thought and speech.

The 10th Sutra shows the way to destroy Mala or Pasa. As the Lord becomes one with the soul in human condition so let the soul become one with Him and perceive all actions to be His. Then will it lose all its Pasa—Anava, Karma and Maya.

The soul when it loses its pride of self and says that there is no such thing as itself and that all actions are His the Lord will unite it to His feet and reveal its true Self to it.

Siddiar 10th Sutra-When you dedicate all acts to Him and stand fixed in that posture, your faults will vanish. God also will hold all your acts as His own and everything done to you as done to Himself and drive away your faults. To the soul which retains the feeling of self, God is non-apparent. It eats the fruits of its Karma and the Karma will induce other births.

Know well that your senses are not controlled by you and that they act by the command of the Supreme Creator. He owns you and your senses. Worship Him.

God is not partial. One reaps his own deserts according to one's Karma.

The 11th Sutra shows the way by which the soul unites with the Lord.

As the soul enables the eye to see and itself sees, so Hara enables the soul to know and Himself knows.

The Lord knows whatever the soul knows as the soul cannot perceive without His aid.

When the soul feels His Arul, God covers it with His Supreme Bliss and becomes one with it.

If the Gnani has unfailing love for Hara, he will become united with Him.

Just as the Sun opens the lotus flower when it is matured so the darkness of those who understand Him by their love, will be removed by His Arul.

It is the undying love, true Bakthi, that is the cause of the soul's supreme happiness. Siddiar says: when the soul becomes freed from the body and purified, God enables the soul to know and Himself knows. The freed soul will dwell under His feet and enjoy eternal Bliss.

A Jeevan Muktha perceives God alone and no second. The physical body cannot persist in Mukthi. Paddy co-existed with the bran and the husk from the very beginning, and we understand the condition when they become separated. From the

separated rice no new paddy can be germinated. Similarly when the soul is freed from its impurities, there would be no more births probodies.

As the Sun brings to bloom the matured lotus, so does the Lord grant the eyes of wisdom to the well-developed souls and appear to them as the Light of Light.

The 12th Sutra speaks of the worship of advanced devotees. First the devotee is enjoined to get rid of Mala as they beget ignorance or evil instead of wisdom. After washing off the Mala, the devotee is enjoined to mix in the society of Baktas. Jeevan Mukthas who are full of love have lost dark ignorance.

The devotee is thereafter enjoined to comtemplate the Bakta's forms and the forms in the temples as His form. Worship Sivagnanis and Siva Linga as Siva, because He shines brightly in those forms though He is present in everything. Cease not to worship Him. The worship of Him in these forms is enjoined as though these are not Himself yet He is in those forms. Worship the form which excites your Love most.

Previous Karma will cease and Gnanam will increase when the society of Gnanis is sought and they are worshipped. Therefore, worship them in all love.

Highest devotees lose their mortal nature and attain divine knowledge by being taught intuitively

by the innate God and by being purified by the eye of the Divine Guru.

Siddiar Sutra 12. Sivagnanis roam about the world joining in the company of devotees, worshipping them and the forms in the temples as His form and singing His praise.

They love not God who love not His devotees. God's devotees are God Himself. They perceive God who perceive His form in temple.

Knowledge of God can only be secured by the grace of the Guru and not by any other means. If one worships his gracious Guru as God then He will convert the disciple into His form by means of touch, thought and sight, in the same way as the fowl, tortoise and fish hatch their eggs by touch, thought and sight respectively.

Chapter IX

Our Scriptures

As the aim of the study of the scriptures is not mere acquisition of intellectual knowledge, but self-realisation, a graded *sadana* (spiritual practice) is necessary. In fact, the aim of all *sadana* in the scriptures is the same, namely, to train the whole being of man—physical, intellectual, moral and emotional for the synthetic realization of God. which is the essence of all religions.

It is through the heart and not through the intellect that God is realised. If you feel, even if you cannot read a book you are in the right path. Many among our Sivanadiyars (devotees) were not learned people, just a few of our 63 Nayanmars (saints and Bakthas) had made a study of the Saiva Agamas. The rest of them were devotees or Baktas pure and simple.

Bakti is more important than a knowledge of the shastras or the Homas tended with Vedic rites.

The two ideals of truth are in our scriptures; the one the eternal and the other not so authoritative yet binding under particular circumstances time and place. The eternal truths are embodied in what are called (1) Sruti revealed by God consist-

ing of the Vedas and Agamas, and the other in (2) Smirthi written by particular sages. The principles of religion that are in the Vedas and Agamas are unchangeable because they are built on the eternal principles that are in man and nature. But those religious practices which are based entirely on social position and co-relation must change with the change of society. That is the work of Smirthi. That consists of Puranas, Epics and Tantras.

As Tirumular puts it Vedas and Agamas are true revelations of God. The former is general and the other is special. The general leads to the special. There are Agamic passages which affirm the derivation of the Agamas from the Vedas. The Saiva Agamas constitute the teachings of Lord Shiva Himself to his devotees among gods and men, The expression Agama denotes that which has come from the Lord—a revelation and not a translation.

There is also a view which treats Agamas as a development of the Vedas and not as an entirely independent body of doctrines. The Vedanta presents the quest and the Agamanta the attainment. (Vedanta is end of the Vedas:'Agamanta is end of the Agamas. Both are the gnana sections or kandams).

(1) Suruti, meaning what is heard, is the primary authority revealed by God. It consists of the 4 Vedas Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas and the Agamas. The Saivagamas are 28 in number. They are (1) Kamika (2) Yogja (3) Chintia (4) Karma (5) Achita (6) Theepata (7) Sukshuma (8) Sajaschira

(9) Anjuman (10) Supprabe tha (11) Vijia (12) Nischuvasa (13) Swayambuva (14) Agneya (15) Vira (16) Rourava from which Sivagnana Botham was obtained. (17) Maguta (18) Vimala (19) Chandragnana (20) Mukavimba (21) Purorjita (22) Lalitham (23) Chittam (24) Chantava (25) Sarvokta (26) Kirana (27) Betha (28) Vathula.

Each of the four Vedas consists of three parts: (1) Mantras or hymns (2) Brahmanas or cermonial codes with explanations of mantras and rituals and (3) the Aranyaka or instructions for those who go to the forests (aranya) to follow religious life. They are mystical utterances revealing profound spiritual truths. These are also called the Upanishads or Vedanta (end of Vedas).

The word "Veda" means knowledge or science. The four collections of the Vedas were made to facilitate the duties of the different classes of priests in the sacrificial ceremonies and the superintendence of the same. The first ciass used the Rig Veda or Versified mantras. The second used the Yajur or prose mantras. The third used the Sama Veda or mantras chanted in a peculiar manner different from the ordinary chanting of tne Rig and Yajur. The Atharva Veda was used by the superintending class and consisted of some portions of the first three Vedas and also other mantras.

The Upanishads if allowed to speak for themselves would shew the grand out-pourings of religious enthusiasm, raising the mind out of the chaos of

ceremonies and the metaphysical and philosophical word-spinning of the schools.

Sometimes the Vedas are divided into (1) Karma Kanda dealing with rituals, (2) Upasana (Practice) Kanda dealing with the worship and meditation and (3) Gnanakanda dealing with the highest knowledge.

Similarly each of the 28 Sivagmas is divided into Charia, Kirya, Yoga and Gnana Padams. The first three are the cermonial portions corresponding to the Karma and Upasana Kandas of the Vedas and the last is the philosophical portion corresponding to Gnana Kanda. It is also sometimes divided into (1) the Tantra portion which treats of the rituals required for controlling the senses and contemplation of God and (2) the Gnana kanda treating of the nature of the Lord Supreme beginningless and endless.

In spite of the diversity in the forms and method of worship the Agamas are all Vedic in spirit and character. The devotional hymns of the Saiva saints around these Agamas, show that the Agamas have succeeded in bringing religion to the heart of the people.

Just as all the scriptures have a common source they have a common aim to make man a spirit-like God and one with Him. Just as a wasp by its stings turns a worm into a wasp, as they say so God by His reactions, teachings, dispensation, evolutions and

all the like imparts experience and love to the soul and makes it feel godly and become God-like and ultimately be one with Him in Advaitam.

It is said that unlike Vedic rituals which is propitiatory and sacrificial, Agamic ritual consists essentially in devout worship and personal communion with the deity. Further, no rituals such as worshipin temples is confined to Agamicl iterature, for the worship at Chidambaram is admittedly vidie and non-Agamic.

The Agamas embrace all in the fold of student. ship irrespective of sex or caste, while Vedanta attempts to restrict competency to certain classes.

It may be noted that it is the Vedas and Agamas and not the commentaries of the various schools that are the authoritative scriptures; a commentary is only a synthesis and interpretation of the text, There have been many which have powerfully influenced the national and religious mind and there is no reason why there should not be a yet more perfect synthesis in the future.

The Upanishads, 108 in number, are full of the loftiest poetry with regard to the immortality of the soul, the creator of the universe, and the final liberation of man through the knowledge of the "God who dwells in the cavity of the heart", All philosophical speculations can be traced to the Upanishads which are an inexhaustible store-house of scientfic philosophical ideas.

It is certain that in ancient times the Vedas were taught to the pupils by word of mouth, by whom they were handed to successive generations and that in later ages, they were reduced to writing. Nothing is more difficult than to discover the actual date of the Vedas. They are believed to be eternal and imperishable as the human soul. Three copper plates of great antiquity were recently discovered in Mysore. From that, the date of Sri Krishna's Gita and Mahabharata and of Sri Kapila have been traced to the early years of the Kaliyuga or roughly about 5000 years before now.

2 *Smirthis* which collectively mean the second ary scriptures derive their authority from the Srutis, their object being to explain and exemplify the Vedas and Agamas. They consist mainly of: 1 Puranas or chronicles and legends like Skandapuranam 2. Ithikasas or epics like Mahabaratha 3. Tantras or manuals of worship 4. Commentaries on the Vedanta and Agamanta by different schools of Philosophy 5. Codes of law like the Laws of Manu.

Puranas are about history, about cosmology with various symbolical illustration of philosophical principles and so forth. These were written to popularize the Vedas and Agamas. The Puranas were written in modern Sanscrit meant for people who cannot understand philosophy easily. Such things, were given unto them in concrete forms by means of the lives of saints, kings, great men and so on. The Puranas are

18 in number. They are: (1) Brahma (2) Padma (3) Vishnu (4) Siva (5) Bhagavata (6) Bowdiya (7) Naradiya (8) Markandeya (9) Agneya (10) Brahmakaivarta (11) Linga (12) Varaka (13) Skanda (14) Vamana (15) Matsya (16) Koorma (17) Garuda (18) Brahmanda.

Ithikasas or Epics:— Valmiki's Ramayana, Vyasa's Mahabarata and Kalidasa's Raguvamsa are the three great epic poems of outstanding merit which typify three periods of the Indian soul. The first was chiefly moral, the second intellectual and the third material. Though these depict what was uppermost in the days of the authors, they have not lost sight of the spiritual which has pervaded and powerfully influenced the three periods.

Ramayana represents an ideal society. The idea placed before us by Sita stands supreme as an example of high morality of the age.

Vyasa followed Valmiki. Intellectuality is his grand note. He, in his Mahabarata, is profoundly interested in ideas involving problems of philosophy and ethics. Lord Krishna's Gita is a product of that age.

Thousands of years after Vyasa came Kalidas. The material development portrayed in his Raguvamsa is brilliant. Religious and ethical thought and sentiment were cultivated more in profession than as swaying the conduct. It was bad taste to be irreligious, but it was not bad taste

to be sensual or even immoral. The monogamous instinct of woman seems to have prevented promiscuous vice and the disorganisation of the home. The inherent spirituality of man's nature finally revolted against that materialism of satisfying the senses. Kalidas represented the highly material civilization of his time.

Tantras are in fact practical scriptures found in the Agamas. They brought theories of religion to the test of real experience. By means of puja or ritualistic worship, mantras or mystic utterances and diagrams, Upasanas, or concentration on a concrete form, say an image, and yoga or mystic exercises they provided a graded course of rousing the mysterious power in man on the way to the great consciousness, the goal of man. These constitute the paths of Charia, Kirya or Yoga treated in the earlier chapters. The influence of the Tantras is felt from the village worship of *Grama Devata* to the highest Devi worship.

The process of realization according to Tantric sadana has to be prescribed for every individual by a qualified guru.

The Vedas proclaim about the soul and spirit, but the Agamas and Tantras come to us with the practical step to be taken to purify and lift up the soul to attain freedom.

Besides the above we have Saiva Tirumurai (12) Siddhanta Shastras(14)and several other sacred books.

In Tamil are the Devaram and Tiruvachagam, the sacred utterances of the four great masters of our religion, Tirugnana Sambandar, Appar, Sundarar and Manikavachagar. Of the large number of Devarams, only 797 are extant. With these should be mentioned the sacred books contained in the 12 Saiva-Tirumurais or Canonised sacred books. The Devaram constitutes the first seven parts of these books. Tiruvasagam and Tirukkovaiyar of Manickavasagar the 8th, Tiru-Isaipa and Tiru-Pallandu form the 9th; the 10th is Tirumular's Tirumantram. The 11th consists of Tiru-Mukapasuram and the poems by Karaikal Ammayar, Kadavarkone, Seraman Perumal, Nakkirar, Kalladar, Kapilar, Paranar, Ilam-Peruman, Athira Adigal, Pattinathar, and Nambiandar; the 12th is Peria Puranam of Sekkilar. All these poems are all very fascinating and are calculated to inspire feelings of love and veneration besides presenting valuable truths to the enquiring student.

There are the 14 Siddhanta Shastras consisting of (1) Sivagnana Botham, (2) Sivagnana Siddi (3) Irupa-Irupahtu (4) Unmaivilakam (5) Sivaprakasam (6) Tiruvarudpayan (7) Vinavenba (8) Pottipahrodai (9) Kodikavi (10) Nenchuviduthutoo (11) Unmainerivilakkam (12) Sankatpa Nirakaranam (13) Tiruvunthiar (14) Tirukalittu Padiyar. Of the above, Sivagnana Botham is found in the Pasa Vimosana Padalam of Rourava Agama (the 16th in the list of Agamas) The original was in Sanskrit. This and Sivagnana Siddiar are

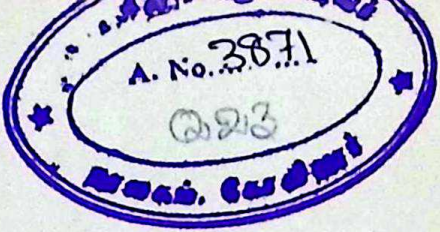
summarised in the last chapter. We should not omit to touch on two more works in Sanskrit, the Vedanta Sutras and Bhagavat Gita found in Mahabharata of Veda-Vyasar. It was he who re-arranged the four Vedas in the present form and composed the Vedanta Sutras as a compendium to the Upanishads. Vedanta Sutras have a Saiva Bhashyam or commentary and the Gita has none. In the Upanishads only the last stages of the spiritual journey are referred to. It is meant for advanced souls. Gita is meant for a man still in the world—a novice in spiritual life. Gita to some is Karma Yoga, to some others Bakti Yoga and to the third Jnana Yoga.

Besides the above, there are some more books in Tamil which are recognised as instructive and ethical. We may mention them to complete the list: Saiva samaya Neri, Olivilodukam, Gnanamirtham Sivatharumothiram, the works of Arunagiranathar Kumara Guru Parar, Thayumanavar, Avvaiyar and Tiruvalluvar (author of Kural.)

All scriptures teach us :—

"Soul with Siva Bakthi shakes off Pasa
Bantham and by His grace gets Mukti
to be united to Him in Adwaitam".

——:o:——



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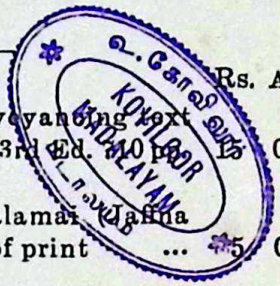

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